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# ROBERT WOODKNOW'S

DIFFICULTIES IN FINDING A

CHURCH HOME.



CHAS. F. REITZEL



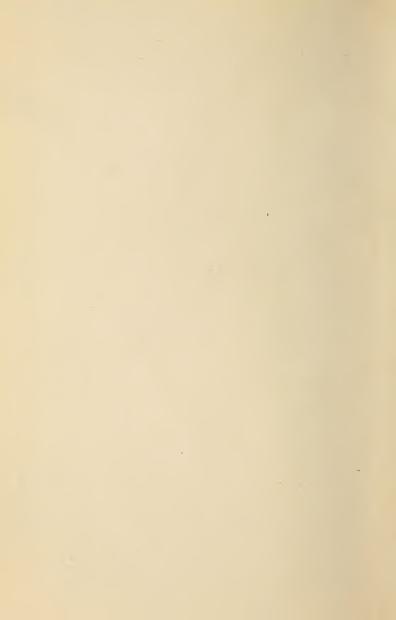
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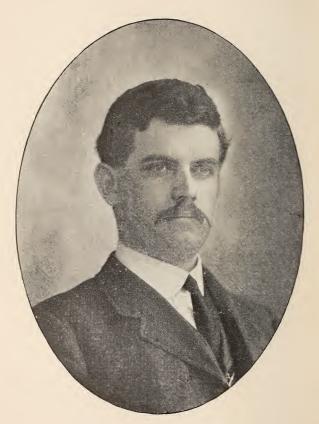
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## CHURCH HOME.

"Prove all things; hold fast that which is good."—

I THESS. 5:21.

SECOND EDITION-REVISED AND ENLARGED.

(Seventh Thousand.)

Harrisburg, Pa.:
Central Printing and Publishing House,
Churches of God.
1903.

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—By—

CHAS. F. REITZEL,

Mt. Joy, Pa.

#### INTRODUCTION.

### By C. H. FORNEY, D. D.

The author of this book is favorably known as a pious, devoted and earnest minister, of methodical and studious habits, a diligent searcher after truth, whose chief weapon is the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. Just as a Christian man knows God in his own experience, so the author of these pages speaks out of his personal experience as a student of God's word. The spontaneous religious beliefs of men in the ruder ages rest on what they have felt and known of the presence and power of the supernatural in and about them, so our young brother's faith rests on the testimony of God in his word. This fact is forcibly evinced all through this book.

And yet there are two other appropriate reflections in order here. The one is, that as demonstrative proof is not expected as to many well-founded beliefs of the world, so it is not peculiar that positions taken on questions discussed in this book are open to a variety of objections which are difficult to answer. This is in a measure due to a misleading tendency in modern thought to set up an unreasonable standard of proof as necessary for active belief. But the rigid adherence to the inspired testimony throughout this book corrects this tendency and brings the reader to face a "thus saith the Lord" on every point.

The other thought is, that there is no more inspiring reflection that can animate an upright and conscien-

tious minister in the fulfilment of a great mission than the consideration that he is in a sense delegated of God to the work he is doing, and that he must one day appear before him to give an account of his work. Such an inspiration pervades this book. It is the author's burden, so that his words burn as with sacred fire.

The style of the book is colloquial, and is throughout natural and fascinating. The writer has a clear, strong grip of his characters. As one reads along its pregnant pages he feels himself in the presence of two character's admirably described in their respective names. This book evidently was burned into the author's heart by a supernatural fire. The author is a Bible student. He leads his inquiring friend not to the intricate logical formulas of Whately, or Hamilton, or Aristotle; but invariably to the more sure word of the Lord. No one can err in taking up this book for prayerful, conscientious study. It can be earnestly commended to all who are inquiring for the old paths and who seek for the good way that they may walk therein, and who have conscientious scruples against removing the ancient landmarks which the fathers have set. For its clearness of thought, its perspicuity of expression and for its prevailing scripturalism it deserves high praise.

The Church Advocate Office, Harrisburg, Pa.

#### CHAPTER I.

"This is none other but the house of God. \* \* And he called the name of that place Bethel."—Gen. 28:17, 19.

NE evening while Pastor Lovetruth, of Ismville, was sitting in his study, meditating upon his work of the day, a sharp ring of the door bell was heard, as if the caller had some matter of unusual importance. In answering the call he found at the door a neatly dressed young man of some marks of intelligence. The minister's first thought was that the young man was contemplating matrimony and was in search of some one to tie the nuptial knot. The thought is pardonable on the part of Pastor Lovetruth. Ministers are only human. After the usual words of greeting the young man was invited in and taken to the sitting room.

"You do not know me, I presume," the stranger said, as he took a seat and leisurely laid his hat by the side of the chair.

"No, I do not," replied Pastor Lovetruth. "However, I am always ready to form new acquaintances. May I inquire your name?"

"Robert Woodknow is what they call me. I am an employe of the Union Iron Works of this place. I am a stranger here, having been in your town but a little more than two months. I am trying to live a Christian life and find that the influences about public works are distinctively bad, which makes the effort very difficult. I feel that I need help."

"In what respect do you feel the need of help?" inquired Pastor Lovetruth.

"I feel I ought to have a church home. I was always taught to go to church and Sunday-school, and now since away from home, and among strangers, I feel the need of these influences more than ever. But I cannot satisfy myself what church I ought to join."

"I admire your spirit, Mr. Woodknow, very much."

"Don't call me Mr. Woodknow," retorted Pastor Lovetruth's visitor; "just call me Robert; it will seem more home-like."

"If it is no offense, I will do so. And your desire in seeking a church home is a most noble one. After Paul was converted he went to Jerusalem and joined himself to the disciples of the Jerusalem church. A religious life independent of the church has been compared to buying a ticket for Chicago and then riding on the platform. It would be more pleasant for the passenger holding the ticket to go inside."

"I should think so," said Robert. "For myself," he added, "I have looked upon my present experience as similar to that of the fruit tree by the roadside. It is the property of everybody and nobody. You can never pass it but what its branches are literally filled with bats, clubs and palings. Every boy in the community feels free to do as he pleases with it. But how great the care of the trees in the orchard."

"What an apt illustration; Robert," added Pastor Lovetruth. "I can find use for your figure some time in a sermon. I shall remember it."

"Thank you. But what church am I to join? They

all claim to be right, yet each seemingly, is going in a different direction. I have tried ever since here to decide which church to join, but for the life of me I cannot. Being somewhat impressed with the Bethel church, I felt that I should like to know more about it. I am more or less acquainted with the teachings of the other churches in this place."

"Excuse me, Robert," retorted Pastor Lovetruth, just a little agitated at Robert's one remark; "if you are seeking information about the Bethel church you must go elsewhere for it. I know of no such church."

That was a revelation to Robert Woodknow of a most mysterious type. He thought a moment, but the words of the minister only grew more mysterious. Finally he said, "That's strange, I don't understand you. Are you not the minister of the Bethel church over on Elm street?"

"No, Robert, I am not."

"The people so inform me. If I mistake not I saw the word Bethel on the church in which I heard you preach the few times I attended your services."

"That might all be. You will find the word Bethel on nearly all our houses of worship."

"Why is it, then, that you say you are not the Bethel minister? Some of your members speak of you as such. Are not Mr. Littleknow and Mr. Seldomthink members of your church? Mr. Littleknow works with me in the shops."

"Yes, both are members. Mr. Littleknow is one of my elders. But it is not a rare thing for persons either by word or deed to misrepresent the body of Christ. Do you remember of ever reading (I think it is in the latter part of the seventeenth chapter of Matthew) how Peter misrepresented his Master to the collector at Capernaum in the matter of paying tribute for the maintenance of the Temple services?"

"No, I do not; how was it?"

"Peter told the collector that the Master paid tribute. He forgot that Jesus was the Son of God, a thing he had confessed only a short time before, and how, that since the Temple was the Father's house, that like the children of the kings of the earth who pay no tribute to their father, it would be absurd for Jesus to pay tribute for the use of the Temple."

But such a digression could not divert Robert's thoughts from Pastor Lovetruth's strange remarks.

"If you are not pastor of the Bethel church, what then?" queried Robert.

"I am pastor of the 'church of God.' You are not the only person who has asked for an explanation of this matter. The two names have confused many. Even my own people are not clear on the subject, as shown by what you said about my elder, Mr. Littleknow."

Robert confessed that Pastor Lovetruth's use of the two terms puzzled him, and asked for a still further explanation.

"It is this way, Robert; we apply the name Bethel to the house of worship and the name 'church of God' to the people who worship in it. Just as you would speak of a home and family as two. I think I can make this clear to your mind if you will take my Bible for a moment."

Robert knew what was coming. He took the Book

hesitatingly, as though he feared he might show some ignorance of its contents in not being able to turn to the references promptly.

"We will soon see," said Pastor Lovetruth, "whether the church is a living, spiritual body of men, or a dead, inanimate structure of wood, brick or stone. Suppose, Robert, you turn to Acts the 14th chapter and 27th verse and tell me, in your own words, what is said of the church there."

He turned to the place, and said, "The church was 'gathered together."

"Very well. Now, could that mean the building or the people?"

"The people, of course."

"The church, then, is the people. They don't gather buildings together. They build them together. Jerusalem, it is said, was builded as a city that was compact together. But suppose you get Acts 20:28 and see what was done with the church there."

"The church was fed."

"Now, what did they feed, the people or the building?"

"Why, the people. A fool would know that."

"Not too hasty, Robert; you might make the large-majority of Christendom fools, as few religious bodies discriminate between the people of God and the house of God. But, once more, get Matthew 18:17. What is the action there?"

"They 'tell the church.'"

"Now, what did they tell, the people or the building?"

"The people, as before."

"Then, Robert, you have gathering, feeding, telling, all of which ought to make it clear to your mind that the word church, as used in the Scriptures, always refers to the people of God and never to the house of God. Furthermore, Robert, at a number of places\* it can be found where the church is spoken of as being inside of houses, which also goes to show that the church is one thing, and the house in which the church meets quite another."

"But why do you use the name 'Bethel?' " inquired Robert.

"That is easily answered. If you will turn to the book of Genesis at the 28th chapter you will find that Jacob said of the place in which he had the vision of the ladder: 'Surely the Lord is in this place. This is none other but the HOUSE OF GOD \* \* \* And he called the name of that place Bethel.' Now, Robert, what is a Bethel?"

"None other but a *house of God*, I presume, according to Jacob's statement."

"Now, then, if Bethel is none other but the house of God I have no right whatever to apply it to anything else; no right to make Bethel mean both the house of God and the people of God. So when I speak of a Bethel I can speak of only the house of God and must never apply it to the people of God. If some one should ask me what the White House at Washington is I could very consistently say, It is none other but the house of the President. If I attempted

<sup>\*</sup>Acts 12:5, 12; Col. 4:15; Rom. 16:5; I. Cor. 16:19.

to widen its meaning and should call the president's family by the name of the house I would make a most ludicrous blunder. Roosevelt is the name of the President and his family and White House the name of the building in which the Roosevelt family reside. It that not clear enough?"

"I think I see it now."

"It is provokingly amusing, Robert, to see how ignorantly people speak of these things, even some who ought to be better informed. It is not a rare thing to find in the local items of the daily and weekly papers items such as, The church of God received a coat of paint recently, which was much admired; or The church of God was burned down last night, or The church of God was damaged by the recent heavy storm. Now, wouldn't it be a horrible sight to see the people of God walking about daubed with a coat of paint, or to see them burned as in the Dark Ages. They don't mean the church of God at all. It was a Bethel that was painted, a Bethel that was burned, a Bethel that was damaged by the storm. When the Pennsylvania State Capitol was burned in 1897 they didn't say the State Legislature was burned. On the other hand, they are apt to call the people of God by the name of the house of God. For instance, they say, The Bethel church picnicked last week and had an enjoyable time; or, The Bethel church decided to begin a protracted meeting next Sunday. Just think of a large church building going off on a picnic excursion! or a building making up its mind to hold a protracted meeting. It was the church that picnicked, and the church that decided to hold a series of meetings."

"Then every house of worship you call a Bethel church?"

"No, not a Bethel church, only a Bethel. To say Bethel church would be equivalent to saying, house of God church, for Bethel means house of God. Or you might with the same propriety speak of a school building as a school-house school. Yet if the buildings dedicated to God for his worship are churches, then they are churches of God."

"How clear it is," said Robert, "when a person once fully understands it."

"Yes," replied Pastor Lovetruth, "if only more would make this matter a subject of careful study. I shall never forget the day when my mind was changed on these things. It was some years ago. I was listening to a sermon by Mr. Dauntless. It was a powerful exposition of the church; her origin, her name, her mission, and her future glory. I shall never forget it. Incidentally he said, 'It impresses me that some of the churches are grossly inconsistent in their severe denunciations of the Roman Catholics because they deify the Virgin Mary and make the Apostle Peter the vicegerent of Jesus Christ.' He then grew eloquent, as he continued, 'If Jesus should come into one of our large cities some Sunday morning and seek for a house of his Father's in which to worship, what would be the result? I fancy I see him as he enters the city. He walks up to a beautiful church building, expecting it to be his Father's house, but is suddenly and painfully disappointed to find it ST. PETER's, so marked on the corner-stone. He starts off for another street. In the

distance is another church building. Says he within himself, "Surely this is my Father's house." But how keen again the disappointment to find on a tablet of marble over the main entrance, "ST. PAUL'S." He goes in a different direction. Several squares before him rises the spire of a building which fairly kisses the sky. The thought comes to his mind. What devotion! What sacrifice! What a grand and full expression of love for my Father! Surely all this could be for none less worthy than He. But alas! he finds that cathedrallike structure built to the memory of "ST. JOHN." He travels till night-fall, but finds not one house built in the name of his Father. The creature is magnified more than the Creator. The childen are honored more than the parent. Foot-sore and tired he turns from the great metropolis. A tear drops from his cheek as he says, "The strength of the hills is my Father's." And in the twilight he goes to the mountain to pray. On his way to the mountain he sees before him a small, unpretentious, frame structure built on a little plot of ground a short distance in from the roadside. In the homely little building were gathered the little flock of the Lord's people of that community. They were singing, "I'm the child of a King." As Jesus arrived at the door he heard,

> A tent or a cottage, why should I care, They're building a palace for me over there; Though exiled from home, yet still I may sing, All glory to God, I'm the child of a King.

A glance above the door of that eye which never slumbers or sleeps, revealed a tablet of wood on which was painted, in faded black letters, the word Bethel.

"House of God," said Jesus, as he interpreted the meaning of the word Bethel. He went in and worshiped with his disciples who had met in the house of their Father. The hearts of the worshipers strangely burned within them, though none knew that the visitor was the King eternal."

"No wonder, Mr. Lovetruth," said Robert, "that you never torgot those words. Such a burning picture is enough to put any one to thinking."

"And, Robert, it is not overdrawn, either. If we could look into the heart of Jesus and read his feelings we would see just such a picture as that described by Mr. Dauntless. Imagine the three thousand believers of Pentecost building houses of worship in different parts of Jerusalem and naming them after the Apostles. It would have been but little less than idolatry. It is no better now. Peter once suggested building tabernacles\* for Moses and Elias, but the Lord never allowed it to get beyond a suggestion."

But Robert Woodknow has another query for Pastor Lovetruth. Says he, "But what right have you people to call yourselves the 'church of God?" Is not every church a church of God?"

"We do not call ourselves the 'church of God;' the Lord does that. All Christians are alike entitled to the name. We have no copyright on it. We accept it as our privilege; other believers have the same right."

"But isn't it presumption to assume such liberty?"

"I think not. When Jesus was offered to you as your Savior from sin, was it presumption on your part

<sup>\*</sup>Luke 9:33.

in accepting him, when so many refused to take the same liberty?"

"Certainly not. I dare not be governed in my religious liberties by what others do and do not do. Must I go to hell because some will not go to heaven?"

"Well, then, if you accept the *Lord* for such reasons, why should I hesitate to accept his *name* for the same reasons? Ethnologically I call myself a Caucasian, because I am such; other white men have the same privilege. But if they choose to call themselves something else, and persist in it, it is no fault of mine. But by what name would you call the church, Robert?"

"I h-a-r-d-l-y know," he said, with just a little stammer in his speech. "There are so many names."

"But do you know, Robert. Does not the church belong to God? Whose church, then, is it?"

"The church of God, I guess."

"No guess about it. It is God's church and you can not make anything else out of it. We are like the Prodigal. In his family relation he asked to be a hired servant, which was the same as being another man's son, but in his prayer he was fully orthodox, for he said 'Father,' etc., which was an admission of his sonship. One place he used a name that denied his sonship, but in prayer a name that emphasized it. And do we not say 'Abba, Father' over and over again in our devotions, which is only another way of confessing that we are God's children. But when we speak of the family, the church, we use names which make us the children of Wesley, Calvin, Luther, Otterbein and others. If we speak of God as our Father in prayer we ought also to speak of him as our Father in

relation to the family, the church. If he is the head of the individual he is also the head of the family, the church."

Just then Mr. Lovetruth's little daughter, Alla, a tot of no more than three summers, entered the room. "Papa, kiss baby good-night," she said as she ran into the minister's arms. As she left Robert said,

"Is it so late? I'm sorry I have taken so much of your valuable time. These few hours could have been spent to better advantage. They could have been given to work in behalf of your entire congregation."

"The time, I trust, has been well spent. Jesus held extended conversations with single individuals. He never considered the time lost that he spent with Nicodemus and the woman at the well."

Robert saw his opportunity and said, "If agreeable to you, Mr. Lovetruth, I should like to make an engagement with you for some other evening."

Monday evening was set.

"But before you go, Robert, let me read you a clipping from the *Christian Standard*, the organ of the Disciples or Christian Church. You may think over it until next Monday evening. It shows how religious bodies are being agitated over the subject we have just been discussing."

Pastor Lovetruth read the clipping with expression. Few ministers are good readers.

Within the past year numerous articles have been written regarding this subject and no doubt they have done good, for we are noticing the scriptural name—church of Christ—more frequently in our papers than formerly. Some writers have expended much thought on the name "Christian," saying

truthfully that the disciples were called Christians first at Antioch. That fact is not under discussion, for no one denies that it is correct to speak of individuals as Christians. But the name of the church is another question, which many writers in their labored articles seem to overlook. The Methodists name their Church after the actions or methods of men; the Presbyterians after the rulers or presbytery; the Baptists after John the Baptist or the ordinance of baptism; the Congregationalists after the form of government of their bodies. So we see that these names are purely human names, of human origin, and they place men, methods, government and ordinances above Christ, the founder of the body known as his church, for he said, "On this rock I will build my church." Were I to ask any reader of this article whether Christ is a Christian, you would all answer no, because he is the Christ; and you would also say that believing, obedient men and women are Christians. That being true it logically follows that whenever any person speaks of the Christian Church, he takes the name from the individuals composing the body. \* \* \* Don't you think it is high time that we are willing to give the founder—the head of the church—the honor of naming it after him, and not after the men and women who compose it? My position on this question can not be successfully contradicted. Then why should our preachers and editors continue to use the unscriptural and human name "Christian Church?" thereby teaching the people an error. The church of Christ is scriptural, and gives the honor to Christ who is its founder and its head. Many are wishing and hoping for a reformation in this matter.

Robert listened attentively to every word. After thanking Mr. Lovetruth for his interest in him he passed out into the street to meditate upon the new revelations concerning the church. Pastor Lovetruth retired that night, thanking God that the Spirit had led one sincere inquirer after a better understanding of the church.

#### CHAPTER II.

"Thou shalt be called by a new name, which the mouth of the Lord shall name."—Isaiah 62:2.

HE appointed hour of Monday evening came, but Robert Woodknow failed to appear. "Was the young man not sincere in his promise? Has he really deceived me? Would the Lord allow his servant to be thus vexed by an imposter?" Pastor Lovetruth soliloquized, as he impatiently waited. Half an hour passed and Robert was still an unknown quantity. But hark! there are footfalls. They proved to be those of Robert Woodknow's.

"What kept you so long, Robert?" inquired Pastor Lovetruth, somewhat chidingly.

"I met Everett Knowall on my way here, who inquired where I was going. I told him and tried to explain to him what you told me one week ago."

"What did you tell him, Robert?"

"Why, I told him that you said the Church of God was the only church that was right, at which saying he became very indignant and said some very harsh things about you."

"I don't hope, Robert, that you told him such a thing?"

"Of course I did; isn't that what you have been trying to teach me?"

"No, no, Robert; I never said anything of the kind. I'm sorry you talked on the subject at all. Your action is as bad as that of the disciples of John, who got into a dispute with the Jews on the question\* of

<sup>\*</sup>John 3:25, 26.

purifying. They confounded baptism with the Jewish washings and then claimed superiority for it. Baptism was no washing at all. It was an ordinance of different and higher significance than the Jewish washings. The Lord's supper, or the eating of bread and the drinking of wine, could be abused in the same way; it could be classed with an after-supper lunch. The fact is that the truth has suffered much by novices who have more zeal than knowledge and who run off with a half truth. I regret exceedingly, Robert, that you have done this."

"I beg your pardon, Mr. Lovetruth. I did not mean to misrepresent you. I did it ignorantly."

"Pardon is granted. My position is this, Robert: the church is a divine institution and should be called by the divine name, the Church of God. Bible things should be called by Bible names and non-biblical things should be called by non-biblical names."

"But what is there in a name anyhow? I don't think that we ought to make so much fuss about a name."

"You may not think so, Robert, but your Bible does. It lays special emphasis on names. Jesus was so named because he was to 'save his people from their sins.' He was also called Emanuel because he was 'God with us.' Moses was so named because he was 'taken out of the water.' Simon was called Cephas, meaning a stone. Luz was called Bethel after the Lord's presence had made it a house of God. Jacob, whose name meant supplanter, or cheat, was called Israel or prince of God after his conflict with the angel. Nothing in a name! you say. We pray in a name. We were saved by the only name given under heaven

among men. When every knee shall bow it will be at that *name* which is above every name. Why, Robert, if you do away with names you will rob the Bible of its beauty and our religion of its sweetness. And, Robert, what gives such hymns as 'His *name* dispels my guilt and fear,' 'How sweet the *name* of Jesus sounds' and 'Take the *name* of Jesus with you,' sentiment and beauty?"

"I don't know, unless it is the name of Jesus found in them. The first hymn that you mentioned was my mother's favorite. It was an unseen solace to her in times of trouble."

"No doubt of that. But strike the name Jesus from the hymns and you will have nothing but chaff left. They would go out of use at once. The name Jesus is to our hymnology what the tree shown to Moses by the Lord was to the bitter waters of Marah. The tree sweetened the waters.\* There must be something in a name after all."

Robert's face took a serious expression. The hymn took his mind back to his home. The angelic form of his dear mother came up before him.

"Robert," continued Pastor Lovetruth, "why did Jesus give no answer to the Syrophonecian woman when she appealed to him in behalf of her daughter who was sorely vexed with a devil?"

"I suppose to try her faith."

"No, not to try her faith; it was because of a name. She addressed Jesus as the 'Son of David.' Son of David was his Jewish title and she, being a Gentile,

<sup>\*</sup>Exodus 15:23-25.

had no right to use it. As a result Jesus answered her not a word. No Gentile could possibly have intercourse with Jesus under that title. And when the disciples took up the woman's cause and asked for her a blessing, to them Jesus said, 'I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel.' The woman overheard the words. Her keen, far-sighted, intelligent faith at once saw in those words the utter impossibility of securing help for her daughter from Jesus as the 'Son of David.' The blessings of the 'Son of David' were for David's sons, the Jews. She dropped that part of his title, worshiped him and said, 'Lord, help me.' She was now near a blessing. She then placed herself in right relation to Jesus under that name and got more than she asked for. Don't say, then, Robert, that Jesus did it to try the woman's faith. It would have been cruel on the part of Jesus to say the least of it. And how almost brutal for him to answer her not a word if it was only to try her faith. But not so. It is a dreadful illustration of the absolute inflexibility of the laws of the spiritual world. Jesus' names and titles stand for something and dare not be prostituted to improper uses. It may seem a hard saying, Robert, but if the poor woman had persisted in the use of the Jewish title the help of Christ for her daughter would have been impossible."

"I never heard that explained in that way before. Your explanation calls to my mind an act of mine the other day."

"What was it, Robert?"

"I went into the post-office to have a Money Order cashed and I was refused."

"Was the Order not good?"

"Yes, the Order was good. And they were willing to cash it. The trouble was with me. I presented it at the wrong place. I went to the stamp window with it. When I presented it at the Money Order window they cashed it at once."

"It was so with the poor woman. She went to the Jew's window with a Gentile daughter. When she turned to the Gentile's window she had no trouble at all."

"In that sense, Mr. Lovetruth, I agree with you that there is something in a name. But when I spoke of making a fuss about a name I meant the name of the church."

"We will see in a moment, Robert. Suppose you take the Bible again and turn to Acts 20:28. By what name is the church called there?"

"By the name 'church of God,' " said Robert.

"Now get first Corinthians I:2 and tell me the name there."

"The name 'church of God.'"

"You may get first Corinthians 10:32. Do you have it?"

"I have it now."

"Well, what is it?"

"The 'church of God.' "

"Now get first Corinthians the II chapter and 22d verse. Tell me the name there."

"The 'church of God.'"

"Now get"-

"What's the use of getting any more?" interrupted Robert.

"I mean to fully satisfy you, Robert. Israel once cried for meat, meat, meat, and the Lord sent them meat for a whole month, until it nauseated them. You intimated that the Bible was silent on the question of a church title. I want you to see that it has much to say on the subject. Now turn to the 15th chapter and 9th verse."

"Of what book?" inquired Robert, just a little ruffled.

"First Corinthians, as before."

"The 'church of God.' Why is so much said in the book of Corinthians about the church title?"

"I don't know, unless it is because it was in Corinth that the church first fell into the sin of sectarianism and where believers were first called after the names of human leaders. An epidemic is always the subject of conversation in the town in which it prevails. But the church title is mentioned other places, too. Turn to Galatians I:13 and see what it is."

"The 'church of God.'"

"But let me trouble you with one more, Robert. Suppose you get first Timothy 3:15."

Robert seemed to have a little difficulty in locating the book of Timothy. "What's the matter, Robert; can't you find the place?"

"I made a mistake. I looked for the book of Timothy after Hebrews, instead of before it. I have it now."

"Well, let me hear what it is."

"Just what the others were—the church of God."

"Now, do you see how clear the Bible is on this subject? Furthermore, I will make you a present of a

copy of the finest Oxford Teachers' Bible to be had in Ismville if you will find anywhere in the New Testament the church called by a human name."

"You can well speak that way; you know it can not be found."

"Why should you wonder, then, that I make such a strong plea for the name 'church of God.'"

"Your position is beginning to look more reasonable," said Robert.

"Only beginning to. I'm astonished. I presume that after you get into the kingdom and see, as we sing, 'all the ransomed *church of God* saved to sin no more,' that the name will appear fully reasonable."

"I'm stupid, Mr. Lovetruth, I know, yet not quite that bad."

"No, Robert, you are not stupid. Your unreadiness to accept these truths is a mark of prejudice more than anything else. You allow yourself to be governed entirely by your early training."

"I confess that my training has not been in harmony with what you have been telling me. Everett Knowall, who detained me on my way here this evening, said that 'we would all be the church of God in heaven.'"

"Does Mr. Knowall ever pray, 'Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven?' " asked Mr. Lovetruth.

"I would suppose so, for it is part of the ritual of his church."

"Why doesn't Mr. Knowall answer his own prayer. If we are all to be the church of God in heaven, as Mr. Knowall says, and God's will is to be done on earth as it is in heaven, Mr. Knowall could answer his own prayer by taking the name 'church of God.'"

A twinkle in Robert's eye betrayed the presence of a bright thought. Pastor Lovetruth caught the expression. "What are you thinking about, Robert?"

"How do you know I am thinking?"

"I see it by your expression."

"It just struck me," said Robert, "that possibly my friend, Mr. Knowall, in praying that prayer was like the rich farmer who prayed for the poor and needy of his community. When he had finished his prayer his son said to him, 'Papa, if you will give me your corn barns I will answer that prayer.'"

"Very true. Many of us could answer our own prayers. I do not wish to judge, but I imagine that if some night an angel should come down from heaven and erase all human names and sectarian titles from our church records and ecclesiastical literature that it would hardly be twenty-four hours until committees would be appointed to undo the angel's work. A few years ago a noted evangelist addressed a large gathering in the city of Philadelphia on the subject of 'Heaven.' On the rostrum back of the speaker was seated ministers of not a few denominations. In the course of the evangelist's talk he turned to one of the ministers and said, 'What church do you represent?' 'The Presbyterian,' was the reply. 'There will be no Presbyterians in heaven,' cried the evangelist. To the next he said, 'What church do you represent?' The reply came, 'The Lutheran.' 'There will be no Lutherans in heaven.' The next was a Baptist and he was told there would be no Baptists in heaven. And so he continued to address each minister and finally came to one of the ministers of the churches of God. 'And

to what church do you belong?' the evangelist cried. 'The church of God,' was the firm reply. He paused a little and then said, 'Yes, the church of God will be there.'"

"But that is a story, isn't it?" said Robert.

"No, Robert, it was an actual occurrence."

"But isn't a single part of the Lord's prayer a weak foundation on which to build a doctrine?"

"It might be considered so if it were the only support to be found in the Bible. But I think I have shown you conclusively that the Bible not only is silent on other names, but that it has much to say about the name 'church of God.' I used this simply to prove that the inferences, if you may choose to reduce their logical force to such, are not at variance with what I have been telling you. In fact you called the matter up by referring to something Mr. Knowall said."

Pastor Lovetruth read to Robert a few verses from the prayer of Jesus as found in the 17th chapter of John.

"Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we are. While I was with them in the world I kept them in thy name."

"This, Robert," continued Pastor Lovetruth, "is part of the true Lord's prayer. The prayer we commonly call the Lord's prayer is not the Lord's prayer at all. The Lord never prayed it. But we are not discussing which prayer of the Bible is the Lord's prayer. We are after the Bible name for the church. In what name in that prayer does Jesus pray that his disciples might be kept?"

"The name of God, the Father."

"And Paul, speaking of that name, says it is the name of whom the whole family\* in heaven and earth is named. Would that not be the church of God?"

"Then you mean to say that the people of God are one family, whether living or dead, and that that family constitutes the church of God."

"Most assuredly. Whether it is the church militant or the church triumphant; the living ones or the departed ones; the church on earth or the church with Christ in glory, it is all one. It is the one family; it is the church of God."

"But I don't see that it matters a great deal one way or the other by what name the church is called."

"Now, Robert, you know better than that. If there was an inheritance in England for the Woodknow descendants and you knew of it and were about to take the matter up for investigation, I am quite certain that you would not so much as change even a single letter in your name. It would then matter a great deal by what name you were called. Now Peter says that we have been begotten 'to an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for us.' And Paul says, 'The Spirit beareth witness,' that is, tells us, 'that we are the children of God.' So, then, anything that tells us that we are the children of Calvin, or Wesley, or Luther, or Otterbein, must not be the work of the Spirit. Besides, neither of these men has an inheritance for us. And if we are children, then we are heirs; heirs of God and joint heirs with

<sup>\*</sup>Ephesians 3:15.

Christ. Thus we see that there is an inheritance for the children of God, the family of God, the church of God. This, Robert, is the legal view of this subject. And it is well to be on the right side of the question, so that when our Advocate with the Father, or Attorney, as he may be called, takes up our claims for the inheritance, that he may win."

"From that point of view, Mr. Lovetruth, I admit that your argument looks reasonable."

"Of course, Robert, it must look reasonable. Truth is always consistent with reason. But let me ask you this question, Why is it that so many of our American men and boys are called after Washington, Lincoln, Grant, Garfield and Dewey?"

"Because those names represent great men."

"Well, then, Robert, does the taking of those names have no meaning?"

"It may have."

"It means two things; it honors the man who originally bore the name and clothes the boy who has assumed it with historical dignity. And these are two very strong reasons for holding to the Bible name for the church. If it honors a human being to take his name, should not the church, which is the body of the Lord, honor the Lord in preference to some man or method by taking his name? He will honor us if we honor him. And will not the taking of his name ennoble the church? Don't you think that the church would be clothed with a more holy vesture; and would it not look more like a divine institution if it bore the divine name of the Lord? Paul was called to bear

the Lord's name before the Gentiles,\* and kings and the children of Israel."

"But what if the church were a reproach to the name of the Lord? Alexander the Great, it is said, had in his army a soldier by the name of Alexander. One day the great general noted the slothfulness with which the soldier performed his duty. He went to him and requested that he either change his name or become a better soldier and cease dishonoring his general. Might it not so be with the church?"

"We need not make provision for evil. The world is full enough of wickedness without the church adding encouragement. Just arrange a seat for Satan, and it will not be long until he will occupy it. We must not make provisions for the flesh to live after the flesh. It is strictly forbidden in the Scriptures. We have nothing to do with the changing of the name of the church. It is ours to get people to live so that their lives will honor it. Some of the churches are striking out of their disciplines restrictions governing certain evils with the flimsy argument that it is better not to have a law than to have it and have it broken. It is a step downward. I would say, keep the name and purge the body of those who disgrace it, after all efforts have failed to reclaim them. This was the course\* pursued by the Apostles."

"I presume that would be the better plan."

"Robert, did you ever read, 'No Sects in Heaven?"

"That poem by Elizabeth Cleaveland? Yes, I just heard it recited at an entertainment in Rev. Epworth's church not long ago."

<sup>\*</sup>Acts 9:15.

<sup>\*</sup>I. Cor. 5:5; I. Tim. 1:20.

"It is a popular selection. Yet it deals a terrific blow at the man-devised customs and machinery introduced into the church. Every device of man had to be dropped by the different pilgrims either at or in the stream. Let me read the poem to you again and note how beautifully this idea is brought out. I have the poem in my library."

It was only a minute until Pastor Lovetruth had the poem and read,—

Talking of sects quite late one eve, What one and another of saints believe, That night I stood in a troubled dream By the side of a darkly-flowing stream.

And a "churchman" down to the river came, When I heard a strange voice call his name, "Good Father, stop; when you cross this tide You must leave you robes on the other side."

But the aged father did not mind, And his long gown floated out behind As down to the stream his way he took, His hands firm hold of a gilt-edged book.

"I'm bound for heaven, and when I'm there I shall want my book of Common Prayer, And though I put on a starry crown, I should feel quite lost without my gown."

Then he fixed his eye on the shining track, But his gown was heavy and held him back, And the poor old father tried in vain, A single step in the flood to gain.

I saw him again on the other side, But his silk gown floated on the tide, And no one asked, in that blissful spot, If he belonged to "the church" or not.

Then down to the river a Quaker strayed; His dress of a sober hue was made, "My hat and coat must be all of gray, I cannot go any other way." Then he buttoned his coat straight up to his chin And staidly, solemnly, waded in, And his broad-brimmed hat he pulled down tight Over his forehead, so cold and white.

But a strong wind carried away his hat, And he sighed a few moments over that, And then, as he gazed to the farther shore, The coat slipped off and was seen no more.

Poor dying Quaker, thy suit of gray Is quietly sailing—away—away, But thou'lt go to heaven, as straight as an arrow, Whether thy brim be broad or narrow.

Next came Dr. Watts with a bundle of psalms Tied nicely up in his aged arms, And hymns as many, a very wise thing, That the people in heaven, "all round," might sing.

But I thought that he heaved an anxious sigh, As he saw that the river ran broad and high, And looked rather surprised, as one by one, The psalms and hymns in the wave went down.

And after him, with his MSS., Came Wesley, the pattern of godliness, But he cried, "Dear me, what shall I do? The water has soaked them through and through."

And there, on the river, far and wide, Away they went on the swollen tide, And the saint, astonished, passed through alone, Without his manuscripts, up to the throne.

And now where the river was rolling on, A Presbyterian church went down; Of women, there seemed an innumerable throng, But the men I could count as they passed along.

And concerning the road they could never agree, The old or the new way, which it could be; Nor ever a moment paused to think That both would lead to the river's brink.

And a sound of murmuring long and loud. Came ever up from the moving crowd,

"You're in the old way, and I'm in the new, That is the false, and this is the true;" Or, "I'm in the old way, and you're in the new, That is the false, and this is the true.

I watched them long in my curious dream, Till they stood by the border of the stream, Then, just as I thought, the two ways met, But all the brethren were talking yet, And would talk on, till the heaving tide Carried them over, side by side;

Side by side, for the way was one, The toilsome journey of life was done, And priest and Quaker, and all who died, Came out alike on the other side; No forms or crosses, or books had they, No gowns of silk, or suits of gray, No creeds to guide them, or MSS., For all had put on "Christ's righteousness."

"It is a question in my mind," added Pastor Lovetruth, "whether Mr. Epworth would be willing to follow the teachings of the poem."

"Why, he applauded the reciter the other evening."
"Yes, that may all be and next Sunday he will likely thank God that he was rocked in the cradle of his particular sect or denomination. I have thought already that it was a great pity that some of these sectarian cradles did not upset and tumble their occupants out. And, Robert, Rev. Epworth forgets that when he was ordained by his Bishop that he was ordained to preach in the *church of God*. When his Bishop delivered to him the Holy Bible he said, "Take thou authority to read the Scriptures in the *church of God* and to preach the same." Now, why don't Rev. Epworth stick to the holy orders of his ordination? The sin of sectarianism is the crying shame of the age. And how can Mr. Ep-

<sup>\*</sup>Part VII, chap. 6, page 331, Discipline M. E. Church.

worth glory in anything that savors of this sin? But then the Bible speaks of some who will glory in their shame, and designates them as the enemies of the cross of Christ. I get fairly sick of these human names, and creeds, and confessions of faith."

"What! don't you believe in creeds?"

"No, Robert, I believe in Christ."

"But don't you have any creed?"

"Nothing but the Bible. I find that quite sufficient. The only thing I see in creeds is that they divide the church and teach a one-sided religion."

"How is that?"

"I think I can make that clear in a very few words. What did two presidents, two capitals and two flags do for our Union in the sixties?"

"They divided the Union."

"That is what a multiplicity of creeds is doing with the church of God in the world."

"But divisions exist, why not recognize them?"

"Don't you know that you dignify an evil by giving it recognition. Divisions existed in the church at Corinth, yet Paul addressed them as the church of God. And Elijah recognized the unity of the twelve tribes of Israel, even when they were rent with strife and weakened by divisions."

"But you charged creeds with teaching a one-sided religion. How do you substantiate that?"

"For instance, if all our representatives in Congress were miners, what would be the effect?"

"It would be a one-interest affair."

"And if all were farmers?"

"It would be the same."

"And if all were manufacturers?"

"It would not be different."

"Now don't you see how creeds teach a one-sided religion? Each creed, as a rule, emphasizes one or two distinctive tenets or doctrines at the neglect of others, while the Bible holds them all in perfect equipoise. As a twig can never be as great as the tree, or a spoke as great as the wheel, just so a creed can never be as great as the Bible."

Just at this juncture of the conversation Robert noticed a clipping pasted on the inside lid of Pastor Lovetruth's Bible which he still held in his hand. He was curious to know its contents, and as Pastor Lovetruth was such an approachable person Robert showed no hesitancy in saying, "What is this that you have pasted here in your Bible?"

"It is another clipping, Robert," said Pastor Lovetruth. "And, by the way, will you just read it. It is on "The Sin of Human Creeds," and so bears very strongly on what we are now discussing. I got it, I think, from a paper called the *Christian Standard*, and if I mistake not the author is Mr. H. F. Ritz."

Robert read it. It was this:

- I. Human creeds have divided the church. Jesus prayed for the oneness of his people, to the intent that the world might believe on him. The creed-maker says, Not so; let the church be divided and then, if a man does not like one, he can join the other.
- 2. They are bars of fellowship. Jesus says, "For whosoever shall do the will of God, the same is my brother, and my sister, and mother." A man may do the will of God and be brother of his Lord, but the creed-maker says, No; unless you sub-

scribe to my creed, you can never become my brother in my church.

- 3. They promote infidelity. Creeds contradict each other, yet it is claimed that all are taken from the Book. This makes it appear that the Book contradicts itself. The ungodly, not feeling disposed to investigate for themselves, at once become infidels.
- 4. They hamper free speech. Regardless of new illuminations and higher thought than that contained in his creed, a minister, for the sake of his creed, dares not be true to himself and express his feelings, lest he be branded a heretic.
- 5. Thy are not satisfactory. Many prominent ministers override the creeds, and one of them even recently went so far as to say that he defied an Almighty who would do what the creed of his (the minister's) church teaches.
- 6. They separate us from Christ. It is only to the Master that we can go for instruction in spiritual matters. Him we must believe and obey, or be lost. For a human creed to dictate to us what we must believe and do, is to separate us from Christ.
- 7. They are in conflict with the word of God. If taken from the Bible, they would all be alike. Contradicting each other, they contradict the Bible. Doing this, they add to pr take away from it. This is a sin (Deut. 4:2; 12:32; Rev. 22:18, 19).

When Robert had finished reading the clipping he said, "I see it now."

"And, Robert, every creed stands as the basis of a sect or denomination, and lest you might get into a discussion on this subject as you did with Mr. Knowall, I would like to read to you a little to show you where sects began and what the Bible thinks of them."

Pastor Lovetruth read-

Now this I say that every one of you saith, I am of Paul; and I of Apollos; and I of Cephas; and I of Christ. Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you; or were ye baptized

in the name of Paul? Whereas there is among you divisions, are ye not carnal and walk as men? For while one saith, I am of Paul; and another, I am of Apollos; are ye not carnal? Who then is Paul and who is Apollos, but ministers by whom ye believed?

"Where do you find that, Mr. Lovetruth?"

"In I. Corinthians 1:12 and 13 and 3:3, 4 and 5. It is a most striking illustration of the evil of sectarianism. Had the Apostle left the Corinthians go for awhile those who had believed under Paul would have founded a Pauline church. Those who had believed under Apollos would have founded an Apollosian church and the same would have been true of those who believed under Cephas, or Peter. The Pauline church would have formulated a creed emphasizing the things embodied in the gospel to the Gentiles of which Paul was the exponent. The church of Cephas would have formulated a creed emphasizing the distinctive elements in the gospel to the Jews or circumcision, as Peter was the Apostle of the circumcision. And Apollos and his followers would have followed a similar course. Instead of the church being one symmetrical whole, it would have stood before the world, as it does to-day, a mass of fragmentary sects."

"Mr. Lovetruth you surprise me. I never thought of the subject as of such great importance."

"The church, Robert, is the greatest and grandest organization on earth." Pulling from his pocket he read from a tract by which he showed the greatness of the church:

This spiritual structure, this mystic house of God, this temple of the living God, far surpasses in wonder and in

beauty and in its compactness all the wonders of ancient, medieval and modern times. The temple of Diana of Ephesus vanished before the church of God, her light was like a candle at noontide before the glare of the mighty sun. This temple, of which Pliny so graphically writes, is lost like a drop in the ocean. The renowned goddess lies slumbering in the wake of time, while the church of God is towering over the wreck of centuries. The magnificent temple at Jerusalem, the pride and the glory of the descendants of Abraham, the place where once the Shechinah dwelt, which once was the type of its more glorious and eternal antitype, after fulfilling its mission, crumbled into dust and ashes before the spiritual temple—the church of God. All earthly temples are made of perishable material, and will ultimately perish; but the church of God, being a spiritual house, and like the eternal Spirit himself, will endure forever. Time, accompanied by fierce persecutions, by fire and sword, famines and pestilence, anathemas and proscription, imprisonment and banishments, has not destroyed a single luster of the church. To-day she looketh forth as the morning, fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners. Assailed by foes without, defamed by skeptics and troubled by internal dissensions and multiplicity of divisions, she stands forth, like the everlasting hills, supported upon the foundation of the Apostles and prophets by her chief and eternal corner-stone, Jesus Christ.

"There is nothing, Robert, that vitally effects the church that is of small import. Paul speaks of the church as a body; the hand, the foot, the ear and the eye of the body representing the different members of the church possessing the several gifts of the Spirit, such as faith, working of miracles, prophecy, discerning of spirits, etc. Imagine the hand going off alone to perform its mission and calling itself a body. Or think of the eye with its one function calling itself a body. Or picture in your mind the ear with the ability

onfy to hear calling itself a body. Yet that is what the church, the body of Christ, is doing. A denomination representing one or two doctrines is not the church. It is only a section, a branch, a hand or foot of the body. Paul laments this mutilated condition of the body of Christ. He says, 'God hath tempered the body together.' 'There should be no schism in the body.' How much better service would be performed if the sections or members of the body of Christ were brought together. 'The eye cannot say unto the hand, I have no need of thee; nor the head to the feet, I have no need of you.'"

"I see what you mean, Mr. Lovetruth. But it is a mystery to me why the churches of God are hurt by every little thing when they hold to the divine name for the church and the Bible for a creed."

"Who said that every little thing hurts us?"

"Why, Everett Knowall."

"Everett Knowall must have told you lots of things. What did he mean?"

"He meant any trouble, or scandal or dissension found among you."

"If that is true, Robert, it is only a strong proof of the divinity of our position. There must be something radically wrong with a church that cannot be hurt by scandal, or error in belief and practice. It is the same principle that is seen when a man gets drunk; the better the man the more he is hurt by the dissipation. An old sot can get drunk and nothing is said about it, but if some man of character should do the same it would be the talk of the town. Which is the greater evil, Robert, the taking of a common name in vain or the Lord's name?"

"The Lord's name, to be sure."

"Do you not see that many of the religious bodies bear only ordinary names, while the churches of God bear the Lord's name?"

"And which book can you profane the more, the Bible or a creed formulated by man?"

"The Bible, of course."

"Just so; our creed is the Bible. Everett Knowall didn't think he was paying us such a high compliment. He was like the Pharisees who charged Jesus with receiving sinners, little knowing that their charge was the very glory of Jesus. A church that cannot be hurt by an Achan has little or nothing to hurt. But, Robert, I have noticed this: that people drift to some of the denominations and that it takes a great deal of self-determination and power to go with the churches of God. And I know that human nature does not drift toward divine things."

"I see it more clearly than ever. But isn't it a little narrow to cut one's self off from everybody else by taking that name?"

"It must not be so clear after all or you would not ask me that question. How strangely you speak. I can conceive of nothing broader or greater than that name which associates one with God. The name 'church of God' does that. If I had the choice of two things, I would rather use a name that cuts me off from men and shuts me up with God, than take a name that cuts me off from God and shuts me up with Wesley, or Calvin, or Luther, or Otterbein. A denomination is largely

one man's thoughts and one man's thoughts can never be more than an atom of the mind of God."

"How do you reason that out?"

"For instance, take the Lutheran Church. What does the title stand for?"

"Luther, of course."

"And who was Luther?"

"The light of the Reformation."

"Now, Robert, do you see that the church under the Lutheran name is narrowed down to one Reformer. There was more than one Reformer. Are we to be partial? What are we to do with Knox, Calvin, the Wesleys, Savonorola and others? And even if the Lutheran title stood for all the Reformers, as the name of the Reformed Church does, it is still very narrow. The church stands for more than the Reformation. That is only an event in her history. But, Robert, take the Baptist Church. What does the word Baptist stand for?"

"The ordinance of baptism."

"Does the Church stand for nothing more than an ordinance? And, by the way, I am reminded of an incident that took place between Pastor Brown and Dr. McArthur, of New York. At the Nashville Christian Endeavor Convention a few years ago Dr. R. S. McArthur attempted to score one in defense of the name Baptist for the Church. Dr. McArthur is pastor of Calvary Baptist church, N. Y. He related the story of the Methodist and Baptist who met in conversation and each asserted that he was right and the other wrong. At last the Baptist confounded the Methodist by telling him that he had Scripture for his name. Said he,

'There is John the Baptist, but you cannot read anywhere about John the Methodist.' The story was an innocent bit of fun, but Dr. McArthur proceeded to argue from the story the name Baptist as a Bible name for the Church. After the service Pastor Brown, of the churches of God, met the cultured and brilliant pastor of Calvary church and said, 'Doctor, if you are looking for a Bible name for the Church, do you not think that you could find a more appropriate title among the Acts and Epistles of the New Testament?' 'Probably, probably,' answered the Doctor. 'How would the name "church of God" do?' continued Pastor Brown. 'I should like it very much, I should like it very much,' added the Doctor. But from last reports Dr. McArthur still holds to the Baptist name. There are other ordinances beside baptism. And if the name Baptist stood for all the ordinances it would still be narrow. The church stands for more than ordinances. Why narrow the church? Why belittle the meaning of her mission? Why obscure her real purpose in the world by adopting sectarian names? But take the name United Brethren. What does that name mean?"

"A fraternal feeling or relation between two or more persons."

"Then it means a relation?"

"At least so I understand it," said Robert.

"But does the Church stand for only one relation? How about her relation to God, to Jesus Christ, to the Holy Spirit, to the world and many others? Should we not have churches to stand for these other relations, too? We would fill the world with denomina-

tions or sects to get churches to represent them all. And if the United Brethren Church stood for all the relations it would still be a narrow sect, for relations are only part of the body of Christ. But what about the name Presbyterian, Robert?"

"I don't know exactly what that name means."

"It refers to the form of church government. But there are other forms in the church, such as the form of worship and the form of prayer. And from the extent of formality in the churches it might be a profitable thing to make auction of some of our forms. But the church is more than forms. Forms are only a sect of the church. I attended a Brethren Conference not long ago, at which the appointment of a committee to set forth their 'peace principles' was discussed. The action failed of passage. The argument against it was that the Brethren Church believed other things besides the peace principles and that if a committee was appointed for the one that it would be necessary to appoint committees for all their principles, otherwise there would be a disintegration of their faith; whereas it should be kept intact. They are very jealous of their faith and don't want it cut up in fragments, never thinking that in the adoption of their creed they disintegrated the faith of Jesus, the faith once delivered to the saints. Will there be no end to this crime? Why not say 'Church of God?' as such a title exalts no one, emphasizes no divisions, recognizes no differences. It embodies all the Reformers, all the ordinances, all the relations, all the forms, in fact the entire revealed will of the Lord. The 'Church of God,' then, is no sect, it is the whole body. Presbyterian, Lutheran, United

Brethren. Baptist are not names of Churches, but sects of the church. The names stand for only a part of the church. They are twigs, chips, atoms and not the body. Now, Robert, is the 'Church of God' narrow? The 'Church of God' comprehends what it takes all the others combined to do."

"I should think not. I beg your pardon, Mr. Love-truth, for even intimating such a thing."

"The name 'Church of God' stands for God and all his name means to a world of untold millions of human beings. It stands as the impregnable rock upon which every false system of religion and every theory of unbelief shall at last be dashed to pieces. It is the name of him to whom the kingdom at last shall be delivered when he shall have become all in all."

"Since I see that name means so much I can not help but admire it myself," said Robert.

"I visited a public school a few years ago. The teacher was hearing a class in history. She asked one boy his nationality. His blunt answer was, 'Republican.' 'No. not Republican,' the teacher said. 'That is only a party under the government. You are an American.' She asked another his nationality. He answered. 'Democrat.' 'No,' says she, 'not Democrat, you are an American.' She told him that the word Democrat, like the word Republican, referred to no nation at all, but was the name of a party or political division among the American people. And yet, Robert, people say they belong to the Lutheran Church, the Baptist Church and the United Brethren Church, when these are not churches at all, but parties or sects of the church. They all belong to the 'Church of God,'

if they are God's children; and if to one of the sects into which the 'Church of God' is divided, then they belong to the Lutheran sect of the 'Church of God,' or the United Brethren sect of the 'Church of God,' or the Baptist sect of the 'Church of God.' I was never so forcibly impressed with this truth as when I read how that during the Civil War there was an unwritten understanding between the Nationals and the Confederates that the residence and the grounds of George Washington should be undisturbed by either. The soldiers of each side made pilgrimages to Mount Vernon when in that vicinity without molestation from the other. Although the warfare raged throughout Washington's State, that part of it occupied by himself during his life was not desecrated by march of battle. One spot in the United States was held sacred from the touch of war's passions and hates. At that shrine the visitors of 1861-65 were not Federals or Confederates, but were Americans. And could we all but remember that we are members of the same body. the church of God, no matter what the sects be to which we may belong into which that body is divided. And will the church never learn the truth Paul taught in the twelfth chapter of first Corinthians, that there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit; that there are differences of administrations, but the same Lord; that there are many members, yet but one body? Why limit the Spirit to a single gift? Why call a solitary member the body? May heaven forgive modern Christendom for this crime."

"Is it possible, Mr. Lovetruth, that I never saw these things before?"

Robert, in looking at his watch, found that it was nearly eleven o'clock.

"It must be possible, unless your ignorance was only of the make-believe kind."

"I was just as ignorant, Mr. Lovetruth, as my speech implied. But, indeed, I must go or else I will be unfit for work to-morrow."

As he left Pastor Lovetruth cautioned him not to speak on anything unless his mind was fully clear.



## CHAPTER III.

"Then they that gladly received his word were baptized."-Acts 2:41.

OBERT WOODKNOW appeared at the parsonage the next Monday evening although no arrangements had been made to that effect. It was an oversight on the part of both Pastor Lovetruth and Robert at their last meeting. Robert nevertheless found his tutor-minister at home awaiting his coming.

"Were you looking for me?" Robert said, just a little timidly, when he arrived at the parsonage.

"Why, yes, rather; yet I feared that my neglect to say something to you at our last meeting might be interpreted as a disposition on my part to abandon our conferences. I expected to see you at service yesterday, but late in the week I received word from Mr. Mahlon, asking me to fill his pulpit, as he had suddenly taken ill. I consented, and secured Mr. Reddyhelp, of the seminary, for my pulpit."

"I was at service yesterday and was greatly surprised, as well as disappointed, to see a stranger in your pulpit. It did not seem like the same place."

"How did you like Mr. Reddyhelp?"

"I can't say that I liked him at all. His sermon was entirely doctrinal. But that would have been no objection if he had not made so many wild statements."

"And what were his statements, Robert?"

"One, as well as I remember, was to the effect that the basis of infant baptism is exceedingly slender and its provisions too dangerous to justify the adherence of any conscientious Christian to them." "Why, Robert, I don't see anything out of place in that statement. It is no more than what I would have said myself on the same subject, only in different words possibly."

"Then you repudiate infant baptism, do you?"

"I most certainly do, Robert."

"Is it possible! I was very favorably inclined toward the Church of God, after hearing what I did about the name, but I must desist from my proposed course. My mother had Dr. Augsberg baptize me when I was a babe and I cannot pursue a course that would cast a reflection on the act by which my mother consecrated me to the Lord."

"But, Robert, think a moment. With all due respect to your mother, we must remember that God's 'word is a lamp for our feet and a light for our path.' We must be governed in thought and act by that."

"That is precisely what I mean," said Robert. "I am surprised that you should denounce the baptism of infants irrespective of what the Bible says on the subject in its favor."

"Well, Robert, what does the Bible say?"

"Very much, I am sure."

"Then if the Bible is so full of the subject, suppose that you find me a single reference."

"That is easy enough. Does not the great commission—'Go ye therefore and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you'—include in its provisions infants?"

"How do you get infants into the great commission?"

"Are not the nations of the earth in part made up of infants?"

"Yes, of course, they are, and so are thieves and murderers and adulterers a part of nations. Would you have them baptized also? But you must observe that the commission does not say we are to baptize the nations. We are to teach or make disciples of the nations and then baptize those who have been discipled, or who have believed, as Mark would put it. Robert, you would make an awful muddle of the commission."

"How is that? Say it again, will you?"

"It is this, Robert: The commission enjoins three things: First, we are to teach or make disciples of the nations. Second, we are to baptize those discipled or those who have believed, and, Third, we are to teach the baptized to observe all things set forth in the curriculum of the school of Christ. The commission gives no authority for the baptism of a single soul among the nations who has not believed or been discipled. And you know full well that a little infant cannot exercise faith in the Savior of its soul. Now, where is your Bible authority for it?"

"But can not infants by virtue of their innocence, purity and evident fitness for heaven be classed among the disciples of Jesus. Did not Jesus compare his disciples to infants? Now, if infants are disciples by nature, why not baptize them?"

"But, Robert, nothing is said of disciples by nature in the great commission. The ones to be baptized were made disciples by believing. Besides, they were disciples capable of learning, for they were to be taught the duties Christ commanded of twelve full-grown men."

"Well," said Robert, "if the authority to baptize infants is not in the great commission, that does not say it is not in the Bible."

"Oh, no! certainly not," said Pastor Lovetruth, "only I would like you to find it, Robert."

"Well, if infants are not fit subjects for baptism, how can they be fit subjects for heaven?"

"The gospel has nothing to do with infants. Not one duty is required of them. Not a command is addressed to them. They are neither required to believe or be baptized. They are saved without either. You must do both. And you pretend to have obeyed the command of Jesus to be baptized, when what was done for you in your infancy when baptized was not your act of obedience at all; it was your mother's act."

"But did not Jesus baptize children?"

"I have never found it if he did."

"Did not mothers bring their children to Jesus for the purpose of having them baptized?"

"My Bible does not say so. It is very explicit. They brought unto him little children that he should put his hands on them and pray.\* This is all they came for and it is all that Jesus did."

"Are you sure of that?"

"I am. If you read the narrative a little farther you will find that after he had laid his hands on them he departed thence. And the fact that the disciples ob-

<sup>\*</sup>Matt. 19:13.

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jected to the course of the women in bringing the children shows that it was not the custom of Jesus to baptize infants."

"I'll admit," said Robert, "that it is not found in that verse. But just wait, I'll find all the authority you want and even more."

"I'm waiting now, Robert."

Robert pulled from his pocket a small Testament and began leafing through it. After a little he said, "Mr. Lovetruth, what do you do with these words?" and read, 'Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins. And ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost, for the promise is to you and to your *children* and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord God shall call."

"Those words are in Acts, are they not?"

"Yes; Acts 2:38 and 39."

"I see nothing so conclusive or convincing in that. While children are mentioned in the verse they are not associated with the word baptism. The persons to be baptized are the ones who have repented. And infants do not repent; nor can they. They are innocent and have no consciousness of sin."

"But, Mr. Lovetruth, you have overlooked the latter part of the verse—'The promise is to you and to your children.'"

"That speaks of a 'promise' to the children, not a baptism. Baptism is no promise; it is an ordinance; it is a duty. The promise referred to was the gift of the Holy Ghost, as prophesied by Joel, which all should receive who repented and were baptized. I guess, Robert, we had better read the verse just as it stands,

and baptize the ones who repent and offer the promise of Joel to the children and to all afar off on the same conditions; that is, that they repent and be baptized."

"I never looked at that verse in that light before. I noticed the word *baptized* in one part of the verse and *children* in another and took it for granted that it was the children who were to be baptized."

"We take too much for granted. The Jews took it for granted that Paul had taken Trophimus, an Ephesian Gentile, into the Temple, at which supposition they stirred up a terrible uproar\* and all because they had seen Paul and Trophimus together somewhere in the city sometime before."

"But didn't the Apostles baptize infants?"

"I do not think so. If they did I never discovered it."

"Was not the household of Cornelius baptized, and were there no children among them?"

"You find that in the tenth chapter of Acts. The persons spoken of besides Cornelius were his kinsman and near friends. Nothing is said of a household or family. Those present came on invitation, and you know as well as I do that infants do not act on invitations. Moreover, if you will follow the chapter to the end you will find four things said of the persons baptized: I. They received the Holy Ghost. 2. They spoke with tongues. 3. They magnified God; and, 4. They prayed Peter to tarry in their midst. I read of none baptized who could not and did not participate in these four acts. Now, you must admit that you never heard of four such things said of infants."

<sup>\*</sup>Acts 21:27-30.

"I'll grant you that, Mr. Lovetruth. But that is not all. You must admit that the baptism of Lydia and her household, as found in Acts 16:15, is a strong argument in favor of infant baptism and one that can not be easily brushed aside."

"I will not admit a thing that my Bible does not teach," retorted Pastor Lovetruth.

"Lydia's household was baptized, which, of course, had children in it."

"Now, Robert, you are making the Bible teach a thing that cannot be found between its two lids. There is no evidence that her household had children in it. Lydia may not have been married, and if married may not have had a husband. She may have been a widow. And if she did have a husband, that does not imply that there were infant children in her family. Not a few families in my congregation are childless. My own family, of course, has children. It would not be a typical preacher's household without them."

"Yes, they say preachers generally have large families."

"Lydia, without a doubt, had a family. Whether they were servants or children it is not said. One thing is certain, they were adults."

"How do you know that, Mr. Lovetruth? Are you not making the Bible say a thing that cannot be found between its two lids?"

"I trust not. When Paul and Silas were liberated from prison they returned to the house of Lydia and saw the brethren and comforted them."

"Where do you find that?"

"You will find that in Acts, 16th chapter and 40th

verse. It appears that they were male persons, for they are called brethren. They were male adults, for they could be comforted; and they were male, adult believers, for they are spoken of as the brethren. And before you call my attention to it I might just as well explain the baptism of the jailer and his household, which is also found in this same chapter."

"I intended to call that up next."

"All I know about it, Robert, is what the Word says, and that is that the ones baptized all heard the word."

"Where do you find that?"

"In verse 32. And not only that, all rejoiced and all believed in God."

"And where is that?"

"In the 34th verse. So you have hearing, believing, rejoicing, as the acts performed by those baptized, and certainly you would not call them the acts of infants."

"But, Mr. Lovetruth, what do you do with the house of Stephanas, baptized by Paul? The reference is I. Corinthians I:16. Were there no infants in that?"

"Not from what the Bible says."

"But the Bible doesn't say anything."

"My Bible does. At the 16th chapter and 15th verse it is said that they devoted themselves to the 'ministry of the saints.' There is nothing infant-like in that."

"I never knew of more than the one reference to the household of Stephanas. And can it be that I have been reading into these Scriptures all these years a thing that seems so foreign to them?"

"That is generally the way it goes, Robert, when a

person jumps at conclusions or pays more heed to the word of man than to the word of God."

"I believed these things, Mr. Lovetruth, as sincerely as you doubt them. Yet wouldn't circumcision be an argument in favor of infant baptism? Dr. Augsberg says baptism takes the place of circumcision."

"Where does he find it, Robert?"

"Were not infants circumcised into the Jewish church when eight days old? Now, as there were children in the Jewish church so ought there to be in the Christian church. Does baptism not bear the same relation to the New Testament church that circumcision did to the Jewish church?"

"Robert, there is a world of difference between Christianity and Judaism. The difference is substantial, fundamental and constitutional. Judaism was a religion of works; Christianity is a religion of faith. Judaism consisted of forms and ceremonies; Christianity is an inward life. Judaism comprised the whole Jewish nation, both the good and the bad. Christianity is confined to the regenerated. Paul was the highest type of a Jew, circumcised the eighth day and blameless touching the righteousness which is in the law, yet he was chief among sinners in the light of the church. Nicodemus was a master as a Jew, yet blind as to the church. And the trouble the Lord had in converting Peter from his Judaistic ideas shows that Christianity is not Judaism reconstructed, but a new system of religion entirely. Many of the troubles in the church in the days of the Apostles sprang from their disposition to confound Christianity with Judaism?"

"What troubles do you refer to?"

"The trouble which brought together the great council\* at Jerusalem, the trouble\*\* between Paul and Peter and the cause for the writing the whole book of Galatians. But even if we admitted that baptism came in the place of circumcision I must confess that you are grossly inconsistent in the practice of it."

"How do you make that appear, Mr. Lovetruth?"

"I mean this: the law of circumcision included only males, but you baptize infants of both sexes. You baptize both males and females. The child was to be circumcised when eight days old, but you baptize children at any age; the law of circumcision included in its provisions servants and slaves, but you baptize only children; the rite of circumcision was to be performed by the parents and not the priests, but you have the minister to do the baptizing; circumcision was performed with an instrument, but you baptize with an element; circumcision had a political significance, but baptism has a religious significance. So if, as you say, the one takes the place of the other, do you not see that you only carry out the idea in about one-seventh of its particulars. And then you claim to be orthodox. But that is only a specimen of the manner in which many carry out God's will. He asks for one day out of seven, and he gets about one-seventh of every seventh day; he asks for a tenth of our income and we give him about one-seventh of a tenth; he asks us to forgive until seventy times seven, and we forgive about ten offenses out of every seventy."

"Then you mean to say that baptism does not take the place of circumcision?"

"I mean that exactly, Robert. Circumcision is a token of the covenant God made to Abraham, in which he promised his offspring the land of Canaan, and it is still in force. The Jews are still a separate people and circumcision is still their mark. Circumcision is distinctly and exclusively Jewish. And since circumcision was never taken away baptism could not possibly come in place of it."

"But why oppose it, Mr. Lovetruth? If it does not find support in the Bible, what of it? Don't you think it is a good thing anyhow, by which to consecrate the children to the Lord?"

"Nothing is good, Robert, that is in direct variance with the word of God. It is an abuse to use baptism for purposes of consecration. It is a perversion of the right ways of the Lord. Baptism is an act of loving obedience for those who have already been made the Lord's by faith and consecration. We have no right to use anything sacred, except for the purpose for which it was intended. Reproof is a good thing for the incorrigible, but a believer must never spoil his devotions by taking occasion to give the reproof in his prayer. Many who pretend to pray do not pray at all. They are like the Pharisee at the Temple who used his so-called prayer to cast insinuations and epithets at the character of the poor publican. Boiling eggs for breakfast is a legitimate household act, but the time the eggs are to be left in the water should never be governed by the time it takes for the singing of a hymn. For a merchant to advertise his business there is no evil, but if he uses his gifts of charity to accomplish the purpose, he is committing a sin. It is a kind act

for a nurse to prop up the window to give fresh air to the bed-ridden invalid, but the Bible should never be used for the prop. Sunday newspapers are a desecration of the sacredness of the Sunday, but the minister who selects the words, They could not come to him because of the press' as a text to preach against the evil, hurts the Bible more than the papers hurt the day. And the church that will use the ordinance of baptism for the consecration of infants will hurt the ordinance more than they will help the infant. If parents wish to consecrate their children, let them do it by prayer, as Hannah did and not hide the beautiful significance of a most solemn ordinance by prostituting it to another use."

"It does look like a misuse of the ordinance," Robert said half-believingly. "But, Mr. Lovetruth, is that your only objection?"

"Not by any means, Robert. I could furnish you no less than six strong arguments against such a practice in addition to what I have already said on the subject."

"May I ask you what the arguments are?"

"In the first place, Robert, infant baptism is founded on a falsehood. It claims to be a gospel ordinance, when it is an invention of man. Christ did not appoint it; the Apostles did not practice it; the Scriptures do not sanction it. In the next place it impugns divine wisdom and insults divine authority, because it claims to be needful or useful to religion, though Christ, by not appointing it when he instituted the church, virtually declared it to be neither needful nor useful. And what right have we to demand of men a thing

that finds no command in the Bible? Besides, infant baptism deprives Christian converts of the privilege of believers' baptism. I meet this over and over again in my work. Converts want to be baptized, but hesitate because of discrediting their earlier baptism-if such it may be called-and thus add insult to the act of their parents. Furthermore, Robert, it requires the officiating minister to declare what is false. He says, 'I baptize (immerse) thee,' when the truth is he rantizes (sprinkles) and does not baptize at all. And how fallacious the statement when the minister asserts that in the act the child is 'regenerated and grafted into the body of Christ's church.' Nor is it true, as the minister prays, 'that it hath pleased thee to regenerate this infant with thy Holy Spirit, to receive him for thine own child by adoption and to incorporate him into thy holy church.' The infant is not 'regenerated,' he is not 'adopted,' he is not 'incorporated.' Moreover, Robert, infant baptism teaches baptismal regeneration. How superficial to suppose that a few drops of water should make a person a child of God. And how awful the delusion to allow a child to grow up under such an impression. To make them believe they are sealed an heir of heaven and sanctified, when they are still in the gall of bitterness and in the bonds of iniquity and on the broad road to hell is a most shocking crime. In the last or sixth place infant baptism in some sense, though its advocates, I know, are not agreed in what sense-makes the child a church member and thus throws wide open the door of the church to a godless, unsanctified, unregenerate membership. Do you not see that if infant baptism should quite generally prevail that in a generation the church would be made up of an unconverted membership, as infant baptism makes no provision for regeneration. And, Robert, why does Dr. Augsberg not admit children to the Communion? If they have a right to be baptized they have also a right to commune. On what law can he consistently discriminate? Why admit them to the one and debar them from the other?"

"But, Mr. Lovetruth, we do not consider the baptized children members of the church until they pass through the catechism and are confirmed."

"Then, Robert, your position is two-faced. When I showed you that infant baptism was not found in the Bible, you evaded my argument by saying that it followed circumcision. When I showed you the fallacy of it taking the place of circumcision, you jumped to the idea of consecration, and now when I show that it does not consecrate, that it does not admit into the church, you say that you do not claim such a thing for it. What do you claim? Where do you stand? Your position is like the unpunctuated sign over a London barber shop. It read:

'What do you think I'll shave for a penny and give you a drink.'

Read as an exclamation it encouraged patrons. But when gratuitous service was applied for the shrewd barber read the sign as a question. The truth is, infant baptism does not do what is claimed for it. Furthermore, if it is biblical it must find its support in the rite of circumcision; if it finds its support in circumcsion, then it takes its adherents into the church,

for circumcision was the door into Judaism, and now you just admitted that subjects of infant baptism are not regarded as members of the church. Now that explodes every bubble of your arguments."

"I see the weakness of my position. It makes clear to me a thing that has been a mystery for several years. I see now why Dr. Augsberg's church, with its large membership, can never get up a religious interest. The weakness is within. The church membership has never been regenerated. It explains too why so many of his church go off into evangelistic meetings and are converted there."

"But, Mr. Lovetruth, if I am satisfied with having been sprinkled, should that not suffice?"

"That depends, Robert. If you are still living the self-life, of course, it will suffice, but, remember, the Christ-life is something quite different. For you to live, Robert, should be Christ. He should work in you both to will and to do of his own good pleasure. If self-satisfaction is the limit of your doings your life will come very far short of the glory of God. His thoughts are not our thoughts, neither are his ways our ways. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are his ways higher than our ways and his thoughts than our thoughts. I fear, Robert, that your vague conception of what constitutes the Christian life will cheat you out of the realization of what God purposes by his grace that you should be."

"What does he purpose?" inquired Robert.

"Why, that in the ages to come he might show the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus. Or as he says at another

place, according to his good pleasure, which he hath purposed in himself, that we should be to the praise of his glory. He travailed in the pains of death for this. And only, as the prophet says, when he sees of the travail of his soul will he be satisfied. And contentment on our part with anything less than this is a dishonor to him. It should be said of us as Jesus said of himself, I do always those things that please Him."

"Why is it, then, that Rev. Mr. Liberalview, who preaches across on Accommodation street, should take the position I do?"

"I do not know, Robert. Does he take such a position?"

"Why, yes, not long since in addressing a lot of young converts he took precisely that position. He even went farther than that, he persuaded them not to become dissatisfied with their baptism in infancy. He was teaching them, I think, from the book of Discipline of his church."

"I thought so, for surely his Bible would not hold him out in such statements. Robert, which shall survive in you, the Christ life or the Barabbas life of self? It must be one. It can not be both. The one or the other must, by our wills, be put to the cross. If we decree that the self life shall live, then we crucify the Son of God afresh; or, on the other hand, if we decree that Christ shall live in us the hope of glory, then the Barabbas life of self must go to the cross. It is for you to say, Robert."

"I am now about convinced that my baptism is not

valid baptism and feel as though I ought to be baptized again."

"As I expected," said Mr. Lovetruth. "And any time"——

"Excuse me, Mr. Lovetruth. I promised to meet a friend at 9.30 and it is nearly that time now."

Robert departed, but not without making arrangements for a conference one week hence.



## CHAPTER IV.

"John also was baptizing in Aenon, near to Salim, because there was much water there." - John 3:23.

ASTOR LOVETRUTH had long wished for an opportunity to preach a sermon on baptism. The opportunity has now come. Robert, with many others, was ripe for just such a sermon. A large congregation assembled Sunday morning. Pastor Lovetruth was at his best. The singing, in which the whole congregation joined heartily, was fine. And what a prayer Pastor Lovetruth made. The sixth chapter of Romans was read as a Scripture lesson. Pastor Lovetruth seemed almost inspired as he read, "Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death, that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection." His text was Matthew 3:15-"For thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness." In substance he said:

"Three things demand our consideration. I. The duty, Fulfilling all righteousness. 2. The person on whom the duty rests. 'It becometh us.' The pronoun 'us' refers to Jesus and John and not to the Scribes and Pharisees whom John compared to a generation of vipers. The duty to be baptized is never imposed upon unbelievers. 3. The manner in which the duty was to be performed. 'Thus it becometh.' Jesus came straightway up out of the water when he was baptized. But our limited time compels us to drop the first two propositions and give our consideration to the third. The word 'thus' is an adverb. Adverbs with respect to their meaning

and use are divided into five classes: adverbs of time, place, cause, manner and degree. Let us then discuss the word 'thus' under these five heads.

## I. LET US LOOK AT THE WORD 'THUS' AS AN ADVERB OF TIME.

Naturally the question would be, When was Jesus baptized? The answer is, Not until he was an adult Christ. Baptism then can not take the place of circumcision. Jesus was circumcised at the age of eight days; he was baptized at the age of thirty years. Why should he submit to both, if, as some say, the one takes the place of the other? Is it not providentially significant that Jesus should wait until manhood to be baptized, as though he foresaw that in later years the church would fall into the practice of infant baptism, hence he places, for our example, his act of baptism as far away from infancy as possible. In his circumcision his 'parents did for him after the law;' in his baptism Jesus fulfilled all righteousness. The first was the act of the parents, the second the act of Jesus: the first fulfilled the law, the second fulfilled all righteousness. Rev. Arthur L. Pierson, D. D., one of the most popular, most eloquent, and most learned Presbyterian divines. in the front rank of agitators for foreign missions, one of the foremost living homilists; author of 'Many Infallible Proofs,' 'The New Acts of the Apostles,' 'Keys to the Word,' 'Life Power, 'A Modern Miracle,' 'The Crisis of Missions,' etc., who sprinkled hundreds of adults and infants and called it baptism, was baptized by James A. Spurgeon, at Croydon, February, 1896. In his letter to the Presbytery of Philadelphia, of which he was a member, he had this to say:

'For some years the basis of infant baptism has seemed to me too slender, scripturally, and its provision too common and too dangerous, practically, to justify any longer adherence to the practice. And the obvious example of the believers' baptism seems to be too conspicuous in the New Testament to leave in my mind a reasonable question that it was my privilege thus to confess Christ, and typically submit myself to burial with him.'

Mark it indelibly in your memory, that Jesus was no in-

fant when he was baptized and 'thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness.'

II. Let us look at the word 'thus' as an adverb of place.

Jesus was baptized in Jordan. The meaning of this is evident. Why should he go into the river to have water sprinkled or poured upon him, unless we admit as a Texan minister told his congregation. He said that the baptizing was not done in the river Jordan, but on the other side; that John led the candidate through the river to the opposite side and after baptizing him there on the bank, led him back through the river and came up out of the water at the place he entered the stream. Our enemies will have Jesus nearly immersed twice to get him sprinkled once. They are like boys who connive for two hours to get out of one hour's work.

John, it is said, 'baptized in Ænon, near to Salim, because there was much water there.' Now if I should say that my wife plants her ferns on the north side of the house because there is much shade there, or that she plants her roses on the south side of the house because there is much sun there, what would you conclude? The only logical, the only sensible conclusion, would be that much shade was essential to the growth of ferns and much sun for the growth of roses. And shall we conclude that anything but much water is essential to the proper administration of baptism? Sprinkling or pouring only requires a little water. And did not Philip and the Eunuch both go down into the stream? 'Thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness.'

III. LET US LOOK AT THE WORD 'THUS' AS AN ADVERB OF CAUSE.

Why did Jesus submit to baptism? It was to fulfil all righteousness. A believer has not filled full his cup of obedience until he has been down in the water and been immersed. But baptism means more. I. It is a public profession of a Christian life. 'For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ.' 2. It is a confession

of the believer's death to sin. 'Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound? God forbid. How shall we that are dead to sin live any longer therein. Know ye not that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death.' 3. It is a profession of a new life also. 'We are buried with him by baptism into death, that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.' 4. It is a symbol of a burial and resurrection. 'Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead.' 'If we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection.'

It may be noted that Christ's act had naught to do with him Sonship or relation. He was not baptized to be made the Son of God, but because he was the Son of God. Paul did not pray or preach to work his way into the kingdom, but because those things were part of the new life. So baptism is not an initiatory rite by which man is brought into the kingdom, but an act of righteousness of one that is already in the kingdom. Children of wrath can not perform works of righteousness. It is folly to preach baptismal regeneration. Jesus was the Son of God before baptism. 'Thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness.'

## IV. LET US LOOK AT THE WORD 'THUS' AS AN ADVERB OF MANNER.

The word baptize, properly speaking, is a Greek word and is adapted to the English language by a change in its termination. If translated it would everywhere appear immerse. Suppose the New Testament originally had been written in German the word would have been taufe. Now taufe means to immerse. And suppose that in the translation of the Bible that that word would not have been translated, we would then read, He that believeth and is getauft shall be saved. Would you ever hear people then speak about being getauft by sprinkling. Never. It would be absurd. And yet they talk about being baptized (immersed) by sprinkling. They

forget, too, that the committee, as is asserted, that translated the Bible from the Greek under King James of England, feared to translate the word baptizo for fear of offending his Majesty, the King.

The word baptize calls for the submerging of the candidate in the water and the action can not be performed in any way that falls short of this condition. The Bible knows nothing else. The Greek word 'baptizo' is used seventy times in the New Testament, and every time in connection with baptism. It has three meanings and no more, viz: to plunge, to submerge, to bury. (Can you make sprinkle or pour out of either?) The Greek word "Keo" means to pour and is used fourteen times in the New Testament, but never once in connection with baptism. The Greek word "rantizo" means to sprinkle, and is used four times in the New Testament, but not in connection with baptism.

Now if Christ and the Apostles meant for us to sprinkle or pour for baptism, why did they not once in seventy times use the word sprinkle or pour? But they did not. There is not one instance of sprinkling man, woman or child in the New Testament.

Rev. Dr. John Robinson, pastor of the City Temple, Glasgow, Scotland, an eminent and gifted Presbyterian divine, was immersed some years ago and soon after preached a powerful sermon on baptism, which resulted in the scriptural baptism of numbers of his congregation. He declared that immersion only failed of adoption in the first Presbyterian general assembly by one vote, and that it was favored by John Knox, the celebrated reformer.

There is an inward consciousness and attestation to this truth even by those whose prejudice denounces it. A Methodist preacher in Texas was receiving several candidates into his church. To the question, 'How will you be baptized?' some replied, 'By sprinkling;' others, 'By pouring.' The last person was a good sister, who replied, 'Just like Jesus was.' The preacher said, 'You misunderstand me; how will you be baptized?' Again she answered, 'Just like Jesus was.' 'But you don't understand me; by what mode will you

be baptized?' 'Just as Jesus was.' The disturbed preacher said, 'Brethren, we will have to take her to the creek.'

V. Let us look at the word 'thus' as an adverb of degree.

It was a small thing for Aaron's sons to offer common fire to the Lord when he had commanded holy fire. But the judgment was swift and terrible. In a moment the two sons of Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, lay dead before the Lord. It seemed a trifling thing for David, though done with all reverence, to place the ark on a new cart in bringing it back to Jerusalem, when the Lord had declared with perfect plainness that the sons of Kohath should bear it upon their shoulders. Trouble soon followed. The oxen stumbled. Uzzah, in all sincerity, put forth his hand to steady the Ark. It was wrong. It was an act of explicit disobedience. No one was permitted to touch the Ark, not even the sons of Kohath, who were divinely appointed to bear it. 'The anger of the Lord was kindled against Uzzah, and God smote him there for his error and there he died by the Ark of God? It was a small thing for Moses to smite the rock the second time when the Lord had expressly commanded him to speak to it. But it kept him out of the Promised Land. That Rock was Christ. So the sin of Moses was more than the difference between speaking and smiting. His disobedience misrepresented Christ. The act marred the typical picture of Christ's life as given in the prophesies and gospels. The Jews were first to smite Christ, then after that men were only to speak to Him and the waters of salvation would come forth. There might be a paltry excuse for the act of Moses. He did not see, nor know, the things that the acts of his life were to foreshadow. But we know. There is no excuse for us. We know that Jesus was buried and rose again. We know that baptism is to symbolize this fact. The sin, then, of sprinkling a little water on the head and calling it baptism is more than the difference between a little water and much water. Like the sin of Moses, it misrepresents Christ. It mars the symbol of a resurrection, the crowning

act in the life of Jesus. Our obedience must be perfect to a degree. His will must be done on earth as it is done in heaven. It dare not be a little water when he says 'much water;' not near the water when he says in the water; not a sprinkling when he says a 'burial;' not a pouring when he says a 'planting.' Nor dare it be a trine immersion when he calls for a single baptism. And 'thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness.'"

At the conclusion of the service Pastor Lovetruth announced that, in all probability, there would be a baptismal service next Sunday, and that those desiring to be baptized should make it known before next Wednesday, so that a definite announcement could be made at that time. At the close of the service several persons expressed their willingness to be baptized.

The expression on Robert Woodknow's face when he appeared at the parsonage Monday evening bordered almost on the painful. It was a sign of a desperate inward struggle. Mr. Lovetruth's penetrating eyes caught the expression at once. Mr. Lovetruth is a student of human nature and his calling furnishes him all the needed opportunities for such a study.

"What's the matter, Robert? Are you not well?" inquired Pastor Lovetruth.

"Why-yes; -what makes you ask me that?"

"You seem not like yourself at all. Your face is the personification of distress. At service yesterday the pathos of your expression appealed so strongly to my feelings that at times my thoughts were more on you than on what I was saying."

"To be frank, Mr. Lovetruth, my conscience has

been ill at ease ever since last Monday evening. I attended service yesterday with the hope of finding something that would ease my mind, but your sermon only aggravated my condition. The more my mind dwells on the subject the less valid my baptism appears. I see now that my baptism was more an act of my parents than my own. I see also how my parents could not possibly perform acceptably an act which the Lord requires of me."

"I looked for this, Robert. The sincerity of your interest in these things could not help but bring you to the truth. And as an evidence that you were not scripturally baptized is your troubled conscience, for baptism is the answer of a good conscience towards God. And you are only one of a very large class like vou. Hundreds and hundreds have become dissatisfied with having been sprinkled in infancy, and in later years have demanded a rebaptism. So strong is this tide that one of the great pedo-baptist bodies at its general conference decided that the ordinance should be re-administered in cases where it is demanded.\* Now, for a body to take such a stand, their first position must either be faulty biblically or their sincerity questionable in the second place. If infant baptism is right, then they only rebaptize to hold a membership. If they are sincere in rebaptizing then they openly admit that infant baptism is neither scriptural nor satisfactory."

"I should like to give my name for baptism next Sunday, Mr. Lovetruth, but I can not get the consent of my will to go into the water."

<sup>\*</sup>M. E. General Conference at Cleveland, Ohio.

"I never knew of a living man that liked the grave. Nor have I ever known of a dead man resisting burial."

"What do you mean, Mr. Lovetruth?"

"I mean this, Robert: Have you not been crucified with Christ? Are you not dead with him? If so, it is not in your place to fight against being buried with him. When the soldiers went to the cross they found Jesus dead and ready for burial. With the thieves it was different. Now, Robert, are you dead with Christ, or alive with the thieves? Which is it, Robert?"

"If I should have you sprinkle me again, would it not ease my conscience? Does the Bible have nothing at all to say about sprinkling?"

"You surprise me, Robert. Your troubled conscience is the result of two errors. In the first place, you were baptized at the wrong time and in the second place, in the wrong way. Suppose you were ill and your physician demanded a certain sum of money in advance for a cure, with the understanding that the money would be refunded if, by following his instructions, there was no cure. Say the instructions were a plunge in a stream of water after each noon day meal for two weeks. Now if you rubbed yourself with water before the meal instead of the plunge into the water after the meal and the cure was not effected, do you think you could demand the refunding of the money?"

"No, I think not."

"So with your baptism. Jesus tells us to believe and be baptized. You were baptized first and believed some years after. He commands baptism in water, but your baptism was the application of water to you. That is why I say there are two defects in your baptism."

"But would the Scriptures justify me in being baptized again?"

"I think so. Invalid baptism is the same as no baptism at all. In Acts 19 there is a record of twelve disciples who were baptized by John and rebaptized by Paul. The weakness in their baptism, however, was not in the manner, for they were immersed by John, but rather in the time; they were baptized *before* they believed."

"What do you understand by John's baptism?"

"In a sense it was a preliminary act. Just as a minister would go into a new community to prepare the way for a church organization. He would get the consent and names of prospective members, persons who would promise to unite at the time a church was organized. Later he would go into that community again and effect the organization. So 'John verily baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people that they should believe on him which should come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus?' John, by baptism, got their consent that they would believe. When Jesus came they believed and gave their names again in baptism."

"I never had that made so clear to me before."

"Robert, if you only knew it, you are ready for baptism now. The Bible says, 'One Lord, one faith, one baptism.' We might just as well have a plurality of gods as a plurality of baptisms. He that says one Lord says also one baptism. The only question then is tofind that one baptism."

"That's where the trouble is."

"Not so much trouble. Let me give you a little parable. If there was set before you three pieces of metal. Of the first piece a few people agreed that it was gold; of the second piece about one-half agreed that it was gold, but of the third piece everybody declared it to be solid gold, which piece would you take if you had your choice of the three?"

"Piece No. 3, of course."

"Why don't you do the same with baptism? Of sprinkling some say it is baptism; of pouring a few more agree that it is baptism, but everybody agrees that immersion is valid baptism."

"But why insist so strenuously on immersion?"

"You misunderstand me, Robert. It is not immersion or much water that I insist on. If the difference between immersionists and sprinklers was only the difference of the amount of water the difference would be small indeed, and it would be folly to raise a dispute over it. It is not a question of amount of water for which I plead, but the divinely appointed use of the water. If to sprinkle required as much water as to immerse, or if immersion required as little water as sprinkling, the difference would still exist. The command to baptize is a command to immerse, hence when we insist on immersion it must not be thought of as a question of much water, but a question of obedience."

"Well, but don't it say somewhere, 'According to your faith be it unto you?'"

"Where does it say that, Robert?"

"Somewhere in the Bible, doesn't it?"

"Just as usual. People who misconstrue Scripture seldom know where to find it. They don't want to know. The words you refer to are found in Matthew 9:29 and were spoken to two blind men. Now blindness and baptism are as different as day and night. The only thing in which the two are alike is in the spelling of the two words; they both begin with the letter b. The blind man's faith was not to govern his acts toward the Lord, but the Lord's acts toward the blind man. You turn everything around. But you must, for when you reverse the action of baptism and apply the water to the person instead of the person to the water it is necessary to pervert the Scriptures to fit it. You might apply the same thing to other Christian duties. You could as well say, I don't believe in prayer and then accept your faith as the rule of your devotions; or you might say, I don't believe in reading the Bible and then use your faith as your rule for Bible study. What man is to be to God is not governed by his faith. It is governed by his word. But the blessings of God to us are always measured by our faith and obedience to Him. To tell you in unvarnished terms, there is no more destructive doctrine outside of Hell than that which makes man's faulty faith the measure of his duty to God. It is the doctrine of devils. It utterly ignores the will of the Lord and makes every man, in matters of religion, a law unto himself."

"But, Mr. Lovetruth, if a man were sincere in his belief."

"The heathen are sincere. Is Paganism right? The

people of Baal on Mt. Carmel were sincere. Were they right? Just think! ambassadors of Christ, commissioned to preach the word of the Lord, whose word must be accepted without questionings and whose word will stand forever, going about telling the people, 'Oh, it makes no difference what you believe, just so you are sincere.' It does make a difference. Let us see. A family was poisoned in Montgomery County last year, by eating toadstools, which they sincerely believed to be mushrooms. Three of them died. Did it make no difference? A man endorsed a note for a friend whom he sincerely believed to be an honest man. The friend was a scoundrel, and left him to pay the note. Did it make no difference? A traveler takes the train going North, sincerely believing it to be the Southern train. Will it make no difference?"

"Why is it that this theory is so popular?"

"I don't know, unless it is a sign of the near approach of the Lord's coming. There will be other evils about as bad become very popular just before the Lord comes. But never mind, all these the Lord will consume with the spirit of his mouth and the brightness of his coming."

"But does it not say at one place in the Bible 'baptized with water' and would that not imply the application of the water to the person?"

"Robert, you have struck a very technical point of this subject. What you speak of can be found at no less than six different places\* in the Bible, but all refer to the same thing. The trouble is, so many people read their Bible, but do not study it. You will find that in

<sup>\*</sup>Matt. 3:11; Mark 1:8; Luke 3:16; John 1:26, 33; Acts 1:5; 11-16.

each instance the reference 'baptized with water' is used in contradistinction with the baptism of the Holy Ghost. These are about the words: 'I indeed have baptized you with water, but he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost.' The references refer, you see, to the element and not to the action of the ordinance. If I should say that the United States Government tested their new rifles with one-half inch steel plate, would you suppose the steel plates were shot at the guns?"

"Of course not. I'd be a fool if I did. It would mean that they did not test them with wood, or some other substance."

"Then why do you add to the meaning of the word 'with' in reference to baptism? It means that John's baptism was water baptism and not Holy Ghost baptism. When the action of John's baptism is referred to it is, 'John baptized in Jordan.' Moreover, Robert, if you look up the Greek word for the preposition 'with' you will find it in every instance to be 'en,' which means in and which very appropriately precedes the element into which something has been baptized, which I have already shown."

"But, Mr. Lovetruth, you will not get impatient with me if I ask for an explanation of one more thing. If I take another step in this matter I want to be fully convinced that I'm right. I never want to undergo again the remorse of conscience I suffered the past week."

"What do you want explained?"

"Why, does not the Bible say, referring to Pentecost, that the Lord will 'pour out of his spirit in those days,' and at another place is not the same event called a baptism? Now, isn't that an argument in favor of

pouring for baptism? Does not the word baptism, as used in the Scriptures, stand with that class of words as kill, destroy, remove, etc.? Now, there are very many ways to kill, to destroy or to remove. It is the end that is to be accomplished. Would not the same thing, then, hold good in baptism? If it does, then it doesn't matter how a person is baptized, just so the end to be reached in baptism is accomplished."

"At first sight your argument would seem to have some force. But a closer investigation will show that your arguments are of a suicidal nature. Let us admit, then, that the word stands with such words as 'kill' and 'destroy,' and that it does not matter how you kill or destroy, just so the end is accomplished. The end, then, to be accomplished in the ordinance is the baptism of the believer, which means the submerging of the body in water. Now, if you want water sprinkled or poured on you until you are submerged in the element, you may adopt that way, but I would prefer to be 'buried with him in baptism.' Now, you people who sprinkle, why do you stop short of the 'end to be accomplished' when you take another method? If you will look at Acts 2:2 you will find that when the Lord baptized with the Spirit by pouring he did not stop until the Spirit 'filled all the house where they were sitting.' They were covered. Why don't you people, who pour, follow the Spirit in the accomplishment of the end of baptism?"

"I see it is no use to argue with you; you take advantage of me every time."

"I resent that statement, Robert. I am not taking advantage of you. I am dealing with you as I must

give an account at the last day. If you still think that baptism by sprinkling is taught in the Bible, suppose that we each take a Bible and see if it is possible to read it into the Bible text. You try and read sprinkling into it and I will try to read immersion into it, and we will see which one makes sense. Suppose you read Ephesians 4:5."

Robert read: "'One Lord, one faith, one sprink-ling?"

Pastor Lovetruth read: "'One Lord, one faith, one immersion.' Now," said Mr. Lovetruth, "which makes the better sense?"

"Your reading of it, to be sure."

"Now take John 3:23."

Robert read: "'And John also was sprinkling in Ænon, near to Salim, because there was much water there.'"

"Now I will read it: 'John also was immersing in Ænon, near to Salim, because there was much water there.' Do you see the horrible sense sprinkling makes of the Scriptures and how beautifully immersion harmonizes with baptism? Now get Romans 6:3 and 4."

Robert found what it was and said, "It's of no use to read it."

"Yes, Robert, read it."

Then he read, "'Know ye not, that so many of us as were sprinkled into Jesus Christ were sprinkled into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by sprinkling."

"Robert, I would be ashamed of the English language if it did not make better sense than that. Do you not see that the only way to sprinkle a person would

be to first grind him to powder or by some chemical process convert him into a liquid. You can't sprinkle objects. Now let me read it. 'Know ye not, that so many of us as were immersed into Jesus Christ were immersed into his death. Therefore we are buried with him by immersion.' But get"——

"No, I shall not get another reference," interrupted Robert. "I see that it matters not in what light the subject is viewed the weight of the argument is strongly in favor of immersion. I shall be baptized next Sunday if I am the only one. And to make sure this time the work is complete I want you to immerse me three times, in the name of the Father, and in the name of the Son, and in the name of the Holy Ghost. I made a failure once and I want to avoid a repetition of it."

"Now you are going to extremes. The disciples who baptized under the great commission\* baptized in the name of the Lord. Let me read you a clipping from my scrap book:

In the early ages of the Christian church, a controversy arose concerning the doctrine of the Trinity. Some Christian ministers who wished to emphasize the idea of three distinct persons in the God-head, began to baptize believers in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Ghost, giving one immersion for each person in the Trinity.

This was the origin of Triune immersion. This controversy has long since come to an end, but the errors then introduced have not ceased. Now I consider Trine immersion a very serious offense against the Trinity. To misrepresent man is sin; but what shall be said of those who destroy the

unity of the Trinity by separation and misrepresentation? Every time a believer is baptized by Trine immersion, these two things are done, namely: the unity of the Trinity is destroyed, and the Father and the Holy Ghost are misrepresented. On the other hand, every time a believer is baptized by a single immersion, the unity of the Trinity is recognized, and the three persons in the Trinity properly represented.

Let us see how Trine Immersionists, from their own standpoint (Trinitarian), misrepresent God the Father and God the Holy Ghost.

Paul says in Romans 6:3, 'Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ (not into the Father or into the Holy Ghost) were baptized into his death?'

Therefore, we are buried with him (Christ, not any other person in the Trinity) by baptism into death; that like as Christ (not the Father or the Holy Ghost) was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.'

Now, baptism, according to this Scripture, is a symbol or representation of the burial and resurrection of Christ. Mark the person referred to, Christ. Not a symbol of the burial and resurrection of the first person in the Trinity; or a figure of the burial and resurrection of the Holy Ghost, the third person in the Trinity. Only one person of the Trinity died; only one person of the Trinity was buried; only one person of the Trinity arose from the dead. Those who baptize by Trine immersion represent what certainly never occurred. They introduce in symbolic form, three deaths, three burials, and three resurrections. They represent God the Father as being dead, buried and resurrected, which is not a fact. They represent God the Holy Ghost as being dead, buried and resurrected, which is not a fact. They act two lies and one truth (to use their own language about others). They lay much stress upon the formula, Matt. 28:19, "Baptizing them in the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Ghost," and little stress on the facts to be represented. Surely this is no trivial offense, but a solemn and serious matter. In addition to this, it is a fact that Christ was not baptized three

times. He was not three times crucified. He was not three times buried. He was not three times resurrected from the dead. Believers do not die thrice; are not buried thrice, and will not be resurrected thrice. Paul says: There is one body (not three), one Lord (not three), one faith (not three) and one baptism (not three). What, then, is the true Scriptural act of baptism? In answer, by the single immersion backward of the believer, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, because this represents what actually occurred. Three persons and one act. It recognizes the unity of the Trinity in the person of the Father, Son and Holy Ghost, and baptizes the believer in the likeness of the death and the resurrection of one person in the Trinity, namely, the Son. Three persons in the Trinity, one burial and one resurrection. This is proper and Scriptural baptism. Not a mode, but the very act of baptism itself.' \*

"That will suffice," said Robert. "But before I go may I ask you to pray for me that my faith may be kept steady until next Sunday."

"We will pray now," said Pastor Lovetruth. They spent a season together in prayer before they parted, in which Robert got a foretaste of the power of Christ's resurrection. Just as Robert was leaving Pastor Lovetruth slipped a clipping into his hand, and said, "Read that, Robert, at your leisure." The clipping contained ten facts on baptism, as follows:

- I. They went out. Matthew says, "Then went out unto him Jerusalem, and all Judea, and all the region round about Jordan, and they were baptized of him."
- 2. They went to much water. This is the record in John 3:23.
  - 3. They went to the river (Matt. 3:6).
- 4. They went down into the water. This is recorded of Philip and the eunuch (Acts 8:38).

<sup>\*</sup>The clipping is from the pen of Pastor G. W. Getz.

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- 5. The person baptized was *buried*. This is Paul's general testimony—"We were *buried*, therefore, with him through baptism" (Rom. 6:4).
  - 6. Buried in the likeness of Christ's death (Rom. 6:5).
  - 7. The body was washed (Heb. 10:22).
  - 8. The candidate was raised out of the water (Col. 2:12).
- 9. They came up out of the water after the baptism (Acts 8:38, 39).
  - 10. They came into the house after baptism (Acts 16:33-4).



## CHAPTER V.

"Whatsoever he saith unto you, do it."-John 2:5.

VINDAY, the day set for the baptismal service, dawned rather hazily upon Ismville, but before the sun had reached the meridian he was shining in all his beauty and splendor. Three p. m. was the time set for the service. Long before that hour the crowd began to gather, until either bank of the stream for about one hundred yards was gay with the pretty gowns of the fair sex, speckled at intervals with the conventional black of the men. The church, headed by Pastor Lovetruth, came to the stream in a body. Among the group were nearly a dozen candidates for baptism, mostly young ladies. It was only a minute or two until a hymn was started. The hymn was in beautiful harmony with the willing discipleship of those about to follow their Lord in the most impresive and significant of all ordinances. You could hear Sister Dulcet's alto voice and Brother Richtone's tenor above the rest, as they sang,-

> "He leadeth me! oh! blessed thought, Oh! words with heavenly comfort fraught; Whate'er I do, where'er I be, Still 'tis God's hand that leadeth me."

In his prayer Pastor Lovetruth thanked God for the young manhood and womanhood willing to follow in the steps of Jesus. He prayed for the opening of the heavens and the descent of the Spirit. He invoked the special blessings of grace for the candidates, that in rising from the symbolic grave it might be to walk in newness of life. One by one was led into the stream

and baptized. But among the number none was so distinguished as Robert Woodknow. All eyes were turned upon him. He was a stranger to the multitude. To the church he was known by the conversations which had taken place between him and their pastor. There was a calmness about his appearance that showed a positive inward peace. A verse of "Where he leads me I will follow" was sung between the baptism of each candidate. Robert was led into the stream as they sang,

"Though he leads me through deep waters, Though he leads me through deep waters, Though he leads me through deep waters, I'll go with him, with him all the way."

He stood in the water without a tremor. There was no resistance now; no rebellion of the will, no, not in the least. He had been to the cross. He was crucified with Christ. He was dead to the world and the world was dead to him. He was a most happy subject to be buried with Christ by baptism. And what a glow on his countenance as Pastor Lovetruth raised him from the water. Ouickly the Spirit went from heart to heart. It was that deep spirituality, that melting feeling, that only finds expression in the silent shedding of tears. Back on the bank, leaning against a tree, was Father Kindheart. He had faced the storms of sixty or more winters. The locks of hair that once profusely decked his brow had grown white and thin. He trembled with emotion. Tears flowed in quick succession down his cheeks. There was a quiver of his lips, as though an Amen or a Bless the Lord was striving for expression. There was no levity or unbecoming conduct. The presence of the Lord had seized the sinners with a strange fear. To Robert Woodknow the event was the answer of a good conscience. His conscience will never be ill at ease over the question again. It was there settled for all time. And the people of Ismville will never forget the baptismal service at which Robert Woodknow was baptized.

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In the evening the church met in the Bethel and observed the ordinances of the washing of the saints' feet and the Lord's Supper. Pastor Lovetruth read the first seventeen verses of the thirteenth chapter of John as a Scripture lesson, after which he made the following remarks:

You may wonder that I read this portion of Scripture at each ordinance meeting. You need not wonder. I heard of a minister who, for a number of weeks, preached on the sin of stealing. The subject grew monotonous to his hearers. At last one of his elders mustered up sufficient courage to ask for a reason for such a course. Says he to his pastor, "Brother, how is it that you preach always on the sin of stealing?" The minister replied, "Just as soon as you quit stealing I will quit preaching on it." The reading of this chapter of God's holy word may grow monotonous to some, but just as soon as every child of his obeys it I will quit reading it. And nothing would give me more pleasure than to find no occasion for bringing these duties to your remembrance at each ordinance meeting.

I want to place this chapter just where Jesus placed it. Mr. Moody in his works tells of a gentleman in New York that had a wicked son. By his waywardness he had sent his gray-haired mother to the grave with a broken heart. One night as the boy was about to go out the father begged him to stay with him, saying, "You have not spent one evening at home

since your mother died. Will you not stay one night with me?" "No," said the boy, "I will not." Then the father threw himself down over the threshold of the open door, and said, "My son, you are stronger than I, but you shall not go out to-night unless you go over my poor old body." And the wicked son leaped over his father's body and rushed away in the darkness to his old companions in sin. Friends, you are stronger than I. You have the power to disobey what I may tell you to-night. You may exercise your right as a free moral agent. I can not compel you to do what you deliberately and wilfully decide not to do. It is the law that compels. But we are not under the law, but under grace. And grace constrains. But this I will do: I will place this part of the 13th chapter of John over the threshold of the door to the Communion, the place where Jesus put it, so that if you come to the Communion without first washing feet you will have to step over this plain command of Jesus to do so.

I recall distinctly how that when but a youth my pastor, Dr. Long, in speaking on this ordinance, said, "Suppose there were twelve ministers on this front pew, representing the twelve leading sects or denominations in Christendom, and suppose that Jesus had washed their feet and wiped them with a towel and then after having performed this duty he should say to these twelve men: 'Know ye what I have done to you? Ye call me Master and Lord and ye say well, for so I am. If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet, ye also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you.' What would be the impression on the minds of these twelve men? Could they come to any other conclusion except that Jesus intended to teach them that it was his will that they should literally wash one another's feet?"

It appears to me at times that modern Christianity is trying to see how little it can do for its Lord and still get through safely. You no doubt have heard the story of the king that sought for a horseman. A number of persons applied for the position. Of each applicant he inquired how near to the edge of a wall he could drive with safety. One said 6 feet,

another 4 feet, another 2 feet, and one as close as a few inches. Finally one said that he would keep as far away from the edge as possible. This is the one that was chosen by the king. The Lord wants the men that will keep as far away from the line of disobedience as is possible. Shame on the Christianity that will give to its Lord its insignificant least when his salvation is to the uttermost. Over and above his having saved us he gives us exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, while too often we ask and think how little we can give him in return and still enjoy his favor.

If Jesus were present with us in person to-night each one of us would unhesitatingly engage in this simple and impressive service. But he is not here. And his absence puts each man upon his own honor. Will we take advantage of his absence? The want of his presence does not lesson the responsibility. That eye that never slumbers nor sleeps is looking down upon us to-night to see if we will be true to our honor. And some day we must meet him face to face, when the secrets of men's hearts shall be revealed, and our whole life will then confront us. How little will the fear of man, that causeth a snare, then appear. How insignificant will seem the mocks and scoffs of a cruel world when viewed in the light of his blessed face. And though we may prove untrue, yet still he abideth faithful.

It may be that some of us do not fully understand the significance of this ordinance. And while I believe that I understand something of its meaning, yet I do not understand all.

"God moves in a mysterious way His wonders to perform, He plants his footsteps in the sea And rides upon the storm."

But he does not say that if ye understand these things. "If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them." Abraham did not understand why God called him to offer up his son. But he obeyed. Naaman did not understand why it was necessary to dip seven times in the river Jordan to be cleansed of his leprosy, when Abana and Pharpar rivers of Damascus,

were so much better than the waters of Israel. But he found it best to obey. Joshua did not understand why it was necessary to compass the walls of Jericho for seven days in succession. But it paid him to obey.

"Trust and obey,
For there's no other way
To be happy in Jesus
But to trust and obey."

Robert Woodknow was present, but occupied a seat far in the rear. He had never so much as witnessed the observance of the washing of the saints' feet. It was a new scene to him. But he took no part. As the church engaged in the ordinance there was a seriousness in his look, well mixed with wonder. His mind was a chaos. He suspended judgment, for the Scripture lesson read by Pastor Lovetruth endorsed the ordinance in no uncertain language. At the close of the service Pastor Lovetruth, as usual, took his place at the door to get a shake of the hand of each one present. Robert was one of the last to take the pastor's hand. "How is this, Robert?" Pastor Lovetruth said, as he took a firm grasp of Robert's hand. "Why didn't you join with us in the ordinances?"

"It's hard to tell why. One reason, I suppose, is that the service is new to me. The chief reason is that I cannot altogether see the necessity of it."

"Just as I thought when I saw you coming in and taking a rear seat. Have you time, Robert, to walk over to the parsonage for awhile?"

"I shall be pleased to go with you."

Few words passed between them on their way over. Each realized that there was before them a subject equally as great as the two already discussed. Mrs. Lovetruth and her neighbor, Mrs. Helpful, followed close after. They were having some trouble with Alla, the minister's little daughter, who had fallen asleep during service.

"Mr. Lovetruth," said Robert, when they reached the parsonage, which was only a few squares away from the Bethel, "do the churches of God really believe in the *literal* washing of the saints' feet?"

"Of course, how else would you observe it, if not literally?"

"I take the thirteenth chapter of John spiritually."

"I can't see how you do that, unless you are something of a disciple of Swedenborg. He taught that at death the spirit withdrew from the material body, and that it still retained the human form, with feet, hands and other bodily organs and senses far more acute than those of the body. But I never saw the spiritual feet of a saint, have you? We observe that ordinance just as we observe any other. We literally baptize. We literally partake of the bread and wine in the communion. Why should we not literally wash one another's feet? How would you observe it spiritually?"

"W-e-l-l I h-a-r-d-l-y"-

"You want to say you hardly know. Nor does any one else know. The truth is, people who observe it spiritually do not observe it at all. They ignore it. I guess those men of whom James speaks, who had faith and not works, had their works spiritually. It is all nonsense to speak of observing the washing of the saints' feet spiritually. And I am surprised that a

young man of your intelligence should betray such ignorance."

"I never gave the matter any thought. I heard others say these things, but never considered the subject much for myself. I always supposed that in washing his disciples' feet Jesus was following an old Jewish custom."

"What custom do you refer to, Robert?"

"Why, that custom in which the host washed the feet of the guest, just as Jesus did for his disciples."

"To the law and testimony, Robert. You take the concordance and I will take the Bible and I will read for you all the verses you find in which the custom of washing one another's feet is found."

"Here with the concordance and I will find you a number." He got the word in the concordance and told Pastor Lovetruth to get Genesis 18:14.

"Here it is, 'Let a little water, I pray you, be fetched and wash your feet.' It is not in that Robert. Abraham had the angels wash their own feet."

"Get Genesis, 19:2."

"'Turn in, I pray you, into your servant's house and tarry all night, and wash your feet.' The language here is the same as in the other verse. Neither Lot nor Abraham offered to wash the feet of the angels. If it was a Jewish custom they certainly would have performed it for angels. What is the next reference, Robert?"

"Genesis 24:32."

"'And the man came into the house, and he ungirded his camels and gave straw and provender for the camels and water to wash his feet and the men's feet that were with him.' The same old story, Robert."

"Surely I can not be mistaken," said Robert. "Now get Genesis 43:24."

"Here you have it: 'And the man brought the men into Joseph's house and gave them water and they washed their feet."

"Get Exodus 30:19."

"'And Aaron and his sons shall wash their hands and their feet thereat.' This refers to a custom of the priests."

"See what Judges 19:21 is."

"Just about as before, Robert. 'He brought him into his house, \* \* and they washed their feet and did eat and drink.'"

"I can't think where I saw that," he said with rather a puzzled look.

"Neither can I, Robert, for it is not in the Bible."

"But now get II. Samuel 11:8."

"'And David said to Uriah, go down to thy house and wash thy feet.' In every instance, Robert, you will find the persons washed their own feet."

Robert had Pastor Lovetruth read the reference in Psalm 58:10, also the one from Canticles 5:3, with the result only to confirm his disappointment.

"Now, Robert, we have turned to about nine different references and every one has been a disappointment to you. In every instance the persons washed their own feet."

"But isn't there a place somewhere in the Bible where a woman washed the feet of a man?"

"I suppose you refer to I. Samuel 25:41, where Abigail offered to wash the feet of David's servants,

but never performed the act. It seems providential that she did not, as though the Lord foresaw the argument that would be produced against one of the ordinances of his church. And this reference, with the others, makes the silence of the Old Testament on your would-be Jewish custom strikingly significant. The only instance of feet-washing in the Bible where one washed the feet of another is the act of the woman who washed the feet of Jesus with her tears and wiped them with the hair of her head. This you have in the 7th chapter of Luke. And this act is offset in such a way by Jesus that it can not be used as an argument. For Jesus' rebuke of Simon, which is found in the same chapter, is not given because Simon did not wash his Master's feet, but because he gave him no water whereby he could wash his own feet. Now, then, Robert, where is your Jewish custom? And, Robert, even if such a custom did prevail it did not prevent Jesus from using it as an ordinance. The Jewish custom of breaking bread and blessing the cup was used by him in instituting the Lord's Supper, or Communion. In fact, the life of Jesus gives a deeper meaning to everything it touches. He dignified the lilv, the fowls of the air, the sheep of the fold, the leaven of the meal, the draw net, in fact every legitimate thing is lifted to a higher plane by Jesus and his gospel. And why should you think it strange that he should lift a Jewish custom to the position of a beautiful ordinance, although I have already shown you that the Bible knows of no such custom."

"That is well enough, Mr. Lovetruth, as far as it goes, but you must admit that they wore sandals in

Eastern countries and that it was necessary to wash their feet often."

"Of course, I admit that. I would not deny what the Scriptures affirm. But I insist on you stating the custom just as the Bible states it. In every instance the Jewish custom of the Bible makes the individual wash his own feet. But in the ordinance of feet-washing they washed one another's feet. There is as much difference in the two as climbing a tree and playing see-saw. You might just as well say that see-sawing was founded on the boyish sport of climbing trees. The two are a parallel. In climbing a tree every boy raises his own weight, but in see-sawing they raise one another's weight."

"But, Mr. Lovetruth, were not the feet of the disciples filthy from the street, and did they not need washing when Jesus washed them?"

"The word does not say so. When Peter requested the Lord to wash his feet and his hands and his head, this is the Lord's reply, 'He that is washed needeth not save to wash his feet, but is clean every whit. And ye are clean, but not all. For he knew who should betray him; therefore said he, ye are not all clean.' Now everything in the words of Jesus point to the fact that the disciples had washed already, and that what he was teaching was not the putting away of the filth of the body, but an ordinance rich in spiritual significance."

"If a man needed his feet washed I would wash them for him."

"I doubt it, Robert. You can find any number of people in Ismville whose feet are filthy and need washing. For how many of these have you performed the act of feet-washing?"

"Not any."

"Now, then, if Jesus washed the feet of the disciples because they needed washing and tells you that he has given you an example that you should wash one another's feet, how do you excuse yourself for your disobedience? You are judged out of your own mouth. You are untrue and inconsistent in your own interpretation of Jesus' act. Your explanation is one thing and your conduct quite another. If Jesus meant what you say, why don't you obey him? Why don't you go about through Ismville and wash the feet of those that need washing? The whole chapter shows that the act of Jesus was not an act of cleansing, but an ordinance of deep significance. Jesus never did anything that was not necessary. And it was not necessary for him to wash the feet of his disciples. They were able to wash their own feet. He never did for them what they could do for themselves. At the raising of Lazarus the people could take away the stone, take off the grave clothes and set meat before him who was raised to life and Jesus had them do it. But at his resurrection he had the angels roll away the stone because the women could not do it. To have washed the feet of twelve full grown men, whose feet needed cleansing, would have encouraged laziness, to say the least of it. Robert, have you no higher conception of the importance attached by Jesus to the last moments of his life? Do you really think that the Son of God would engage in a meaningless act at the very eventide of his life on earth? Why, Robert, if

you knew your death was only a question of a few hours, you would spend it in employment of more importance than that. How dare you say that Jesus washed his disciples' feet for cleansing purposes? Do you mean to say that at the very last Jesus turned away from his real mission on earth and devoted his impaired energies to secular things? Can you conceive of the will of the Father, to which he yielded when in the throes of Gethsemane's sorrow, as outlining such a course for his last moments on earth? I would not be guilty of imputing such a low motive to the act of Jesus."

"But, Mr. Lovetruth, if it is an ordinance, why is it only spoken of in the gospel by John and not in the epistles?"

"How often do you want God to say a thing in order for it to be true? Do you believe what Christ said to Nicodemus about the new birth?"

"Of course I do."

"Do you believe what he said to the woman at the well about the living water?"

"Of course, why shouldn't I?"

"Do you believe what he said about himself as the Bread of Life and the Good Shepherd?"

"I'd be a heathen if I did not. Why do you ask me such strange questions?"

"I refer to them because they are only mentioned once in the Bible and that in the gospel by John, the same gospel in which we find the reference to feetwashing. If you intend to cut out of the Bible everything that is mentioned but once you will have a big

undertaking and after you get through you will have a very small Bible."

"But isn't the Communion mentioned in the gospels and also in Corinthians?"

"True, but if you study the reference to the Communion in first Corinthians, 11th chapter, you will find that it is only by way of correction, otherwise there would be no reference at all to it outside of the gospels. The amount that is said on a subject in the Bible is not as strong an argument as what is said. In the Congress of the United States little or nothing has been said about slavery since the sixties and yet at every session of Congress lengthy discussions are indulged in on the tariff question. Do we understand that the tariff question is greater than the slavery question? By no means. There is no occasion to say anything on the slavery question now. The 13th amendment settled the question of slavery or involuntary servitude. But if that amendment were ignored we would soon hear from Congress just as the Corinthians heard from Paul when they profaned the Lord's Supper. And, moreover, Robert, you will find a reference to the washing of the saints' feet outside of the gospels. There is a reference in I. Timothy 5:10. It speaks of the conditions prescribed for the enrollment of widows in the early church. Among the conditions, according to the revised version, we find: 'If she hath used hospitality to strangers, if she hath washed the saints' feet.' Now, the washing of feet could not be an act of hospitality, as it is mentioned apart from the hospitality to be shown to strangers. She was to show hospitality to strangers,

but to wash the feet of the saints. I am not ignorant either that there is an argument or an objection that says that the washing of the saints' feet is mentioned among good works and therefore could not refer to a ceremonial ordinance. Does not Christ speak of baptism with good works in the great commission and no doubt includes the Lord's Supper and feet-washing in the 'all things whatsoever I have commanded you.' It was no small affair to neglect this ordinance in the days of the Apostles. Poor widows were cut off from temporal help from the church for refusing to wash the saints' feet. And how much of the spiritual help of Jesus do you suppose we lose when guilty of the same neglect? Jesus told Peter, 'If I wash thee not thou hast no part with me.' And then some will class this ordinance among the non-essentials of religion. There is nothing a non-essential that Jesus commands."

"But, Mr. Lovetruth, did Jesus really command it?"

"If he did not, then the Bible has no commands. The force of the command to wash one another's feet rests on the fact that Jesus washed the feet of his disciples. In a similar manner he builds the proof of his second coming on his ascension, when he says, 'If I go away, I will come again.' The evidence of his ascension is the prof or assurance of his second coming. If the one is a fact then the other is a prophecy. And when Jesus says, 'If I your Lord and Master have washed your feet, ye ought also to wash one another's feet,' he means to say that the force of the obligation for us to wash one another's feet is as great as the evidence supporting the fact that he washed the feet

of his disciples. Robert, do you think that Jesus washed the feet of his disciples?"

"Yes, of course, I do. I never disputed that. My argument is that it is not obligatory on us."

"But, Robert, when you admit the one you concede the other. If Jesus washed the feet of his disciples then we ought to wash one another's feet; if he did not, then the authority for its observance has lost much of its force. But he did wash the feet of his disciples and you have admitted it and that should settle the question forever."

"But Jesus only says we 'ought' to wash one another's feet. He does not say we must or shall."

"So you think there is no force in the word 'ought?" Why, Robert, every letter of the word is pregnant with obligation. The word ought is the past tense of the verb owe. And to owe is the very essence of obligation. The use of the word 'ought' in the Bible clothes it with a tremendous meaning. The Bible says, 'We ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip.' Is it our choice, then, to do as we please in the matter? Shall we accept it as our privilege to use our liberty with the things which we have heard? The Bible says, 'We ought not to think the Godhead is like unto gold, or silver, or stone, graven by art, and man's device.' Shall we think of the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity with no larger conception than that which the pagan has of his idols and be blameless in his sight? Shall we think of the Invisible One as the heathen does of his gods and not be guilty of sin? Yet he only forbids these things with an

'ought.' The Bible says, 'Men ought always to pray and not to faint.' Shall we do as we please about praying? Does the word 'ought' not make prayer a part of the believer's duty? The Bible says, 'We "ought" to obey God rather than man.' Shall we use our liberty as to whom we shall render obedience? We might as well have no Bible at all if we intend to pay no heed to it's commands. In the parable of the talents\* we see the importance Tesus attaches to the word 'ought' when he deals with those who ignore its obligation. The man that received the one talent buried it in the ground, with the lame excuse that he feared the Lord because of his exacting nature. The Lord silenced his excuse by showing him that what he used as an excuse was the very strongest reason for faithfulness, and clinched his statements with these words: 'Thou oughtest therefore to have put my money to the exchangers, and then at my coming I should have received mine own with usury.' And because he did not do what he 'ought' to have done he was cast as an unprofitable servant into outer darkness. Now, Robert, if you can evade this plain duty, then the Bible has no duty for you."

"You are making that a little strong, Mr. Love-truth."

"Robert, allow me to read a sketch from Mr. Cook's 'Monday Lectures.'" Mr. Lovetruth got the work and read:

Take the single syllable ought, and weigh it, my surprising sceptical friends, and do so according to the sternest rules of the scientific methods. How are we to ascertain what this

<sup>\*</sup>Matt. 25:14-80.

word weighs, unless it be by experiment? What experiment shall we try with it, if it be not that of weighing over against it something very heavy. What shall we weigh against the one word 'ought?' Here is a soldier with an empty sleeve. There was a day when the question arose, whether he ought to go to the front in the war. He had to maintain father and mother; and the word home is supposed to be a very weighty one. Heavier than the word father or mother is the word wife. He weighed that word and the others with it against the one word ought; and father and mother and wife went up in the scale, and ought went down and he went to the front. Is ought scientifically known to weigh anything? Here is another soldier who had father, mother, wife, and children, to weigh against that insignificant syllable, and he weighed them, in the mornings, and the noon, in both the sacred twilights, as they say in India-and in the midnights. Father, mother, wife and children were words to which he allowed their weight. He was the only support of his family, but the one word ought again and again carried up the weight of these weightiest contradicting syllables. What if this soldier and that could have put into the left-hand scale all that men value in wealth and honor or reputation? I will not suppose the word honor to have any other meaning than reputation, for I cannot weigh ought against ought; and a man ought to maintain his honor. We must not be so unscientific as to weigh a thing against itself. But we put in here, outward standing among men, and wealth, and life. If you please, sum up the globes as so much silver and the sun as so much gold, and cast the hosts of heaven as diamonds on a necklace, into one scale, and if there is not in it any part of the word ought-if ought is absent in the one scale, and present in the other-up will go your scale laden with the universe, as a crackling paper scroll is carried aloft in a conflagration ascending toward the stars. Is it not both a curious and an appalling fact, this weight of the word ought-and vet a fact absolutely undeniable? Where is the materialist or the pantheist who dares assert that I am making this syllable too heavy? You may weigh against that word everything but

God, and it will outweigh all but himself. I cannot imagine God weighed against *ought*. Precisely here is the explanation of a mystery. God is in the word *ought*, and therefore it outweighs all but God.

"That is beautiful, Mr. Lovetruth, beyond doubt, but when the Lord gives a command he generally enforces it with the word *shall*, does he not?"

"Shall is the *law* term for obligation and is used almost exclusively in the Old Testament. It genders fear. Under grace we are led by love. Robert, you observe the Communion and not one place in all the New Testament is it commanded. The Bible does say, referring to the Communion, 'As oft as ye do this, ye do show forth the Lord's death until he come.' But there is no command in that. Nor should he need to command us to commemorate an act in which we have an expression of the culmination of his love for a world of sinners."

"Then you admit, Mr. Lovetruth, that the duty to wash one another's feet is not enforced by any term as strong as the word shall, which you call a law term?"

"No, I do not admit anything of the kind. I have said nothing, I hope, that has given place to such an inference. I only attempted to show that the children of God should be constrained by love and not fear. It is a shame to the Christianity of the age that it is necessary for our Lord to use law terms to enforce obedience to duties under grace."

"Where does he use a law term, Mr. Lovetruth, in enforcing feet-washing?"

"After Jesus washed the feet of his disciples he

said, 'I have given you an example that ye should do as I have done to you.' Where can you get a stronger term than the word should? 'Should' is an auxiliary verb and is the past tense of the verb shall, and in force of obligation is equivalent to it. Robert, I challenge you to find any duty enforced by stronger language than that."

"Why is it, then that so many look upon feet-washing as impolite and foolish?"

"That is a strange question, Robert. Do you think that I have time to solve the philosophy of every phase of disobedience and unbelief? I don't know why they should look upon it as impolite, except it be because of the nature of its observance. Those same people never think it impolite to go to the seashore and walk the beach among the promiscuous multitude dressed in bathing suits. When it is for pleasure they never think of their modesty. I despise such mock modesty. If the ordinance called for the washing of the saints' hands every body of believers in Christendom would observe it."

"I have no doubt of that, Mr. Lovetruth."

"Then you mean to say that the arguments in favor of feet-washing would be sufficient to establish an ordinance, providing the observance of the ordinance did not require the crucifixion of the flesh in any form? In other words, you acknowledge that the claim of Jesus on your life touching these things is sufficient, but admit that the tendencies in your nature to disobedience are greater. Shame on such confession. But, Robert, what do you mean by speaking of the ordinance as being 'foolish?' Is Jesus a fool?"

"Why, it seems both strange and useless to wash one another's feet, if it is not for cleansing purposes."

"Why don't you think it strange to eat bread in the Communion when you are not hungry? It is just as odd to eat bread when not hungry as to wash feet when they are not filthy. Have I not been telling you all along that, like baptism and the Communion, feetwashing is an ordinance with a spiritual significance. Moreover, Robert, when Jesus washed his disciples' feet he did it as an example. What is an example, if it is not to be followed? Suppose a farmer should hire a set of men to reap and gather his grain. The farmer enters the field and sets his servants an example by cutting a quantity of grain, binding it in sheaves and placing it in shocks. When he has set the example he says, 'I have given you an example that ye should do as I have done.' The farmer leaves the servants. The servants begin to reason, 'If we only feel to do, if we are humble enough, if we are willing to do what our employer has told us he will take the will and our humble feeling for the deed.' And so they go for the shade of some tree. When the farmer returns he finds the grain still standing in the field. Would the reasoning of the servants meet the approbation of the farmer? Would he reward them for their disobedience? And what would you think if one of the chief servants should not only refuse to follow the master's example, but turn and cut open and scatter the sheaves bound and shocked by the farmer? Yet, Robert, that is what some ministers are doing. They not only refuse to follow the Lord's example in the washing of the disciples' feet, but virtually mutiliate the record of Christ's example in the most horrible form. Jehudi has not been the only man who used the pen knife on the Bible. There is no duty in the Bible taught so strongly. Jesus commands it. Jesus gives us his example for it. Jesus promises us a blesisng if we observe it. If Pedobaptists could furnish arguments half as strong for the sprinkling of infants I should forever close my lips against the practice. There is no command for the sprinkling of infants. There is not the example of Jesus for it. There is no promise for those who practice it. Yet thousands advocate it and ignore an ordinance that is clothed with every conceivable evidence of obligation. Where did you get your arguments against the ordinance of feet-washing?"

"Some are my own and some I got through Dr. Augsberg."

"What authority has Dr. Augsberg for teaching people to disobey the commands of Jesus? His commission must differ from mine. My commission commands me to 'teach them to *observe all* things.' Do you know what the Bible has to say on Dr. Augsberg's conduct?"

"No, what does it say?"

"It says, 'Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven.' In these words we have the penalty for the minister who not only breaks the commandments of Jesus but who, in addition to his own transgression, teaches others a course of disobedience also."

"Is disobedience such a grave offense?"

"Grave! I should think so. It is as the sin of witch-

craft. There was a prophet\* once sent from Judah to Bethel to cry against the sacrifices of Jereboam. He was told by the Lord not to eat or drink while in Bethel and after his mission was performed to return by a different way. Jereboam tempted him to disobedience, but he consented not. His reason was, 'So it was charged me by the word of the Lord.' On his way back he was followed by an old prophet of Bethel who entreated him to go back and eat bread. Again he refused, giving as his reason the word of the Lord. Then the old prophet of Bethel forged a lie and said, 'I am a prophet also, as thou art and an angel spake unto me, saying, Bring him back with thee into thine house that he may eat bread and drink water.' He hesitated. 'Shall I accept the alleged message of the angel, as delivered by the prophet of Bethel, or shall I take the message of the word of the Lord?' The difference seemed small indeed. He yielded. It cost him his life. He had not gone far on his way back until a lion met him and slew him. I think Paul had this in mind when he wrote to the Galatians who had taken to another gospel, 'But though we or an angel from heaven preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed.' And to make it more emphatic he adds, 'As we said before, so say I now again, If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed.' It is a dangerous thing to take even the word of angels in preference to the word of God, how much more dangerous to take the word of man. You may take the words of Dr. Augsberg, but

<sup>\*</sup>I. Kings 13.

I will take the word of the Lord. It is the man who hears the sayings of Jesus and does them that is likened to the man who built his house upon a rock."

"Then you expect every member of the church to comply with the ordinance of feet-washing?"

"Most certainly, Robert. If they do not they disobey on their own responsibility. Why should I expect anything less than this when the Lord lays the duty upon us in such plain, convincing terms?"

"If that is your position, Mr. Lovetruth, you need no longer consider me a prospective member of your church. I have too much manly pride and independence to stoop to an ordinance so low."

"What! will you cease your present course? Shall these pleasant conferences come to an abrupt ending? Will you draw back to your old ways?"

"In that many words, that is what I mean to do."

"I'm sorry for you, Robert. One of two things, young man, must be true: You are either right in this matter or else I am right. If I am right you are wrong, and if I am wrong you are right. And, Robert, if you think me to be in error, will you fervently pray for me that I may be led from my erroneous ideas into the true light of the gospel of Jesus. Life is too serious and eternity filled with too many certainties to pass our days in open and defiant indifference to the commands of Jesus. It will never pay to be in error. I know I shall pray for you. I feel that you need to be prayed for."

Robert made no reply. He was more than righteously indignant. He took his hat and with little ceremony departed. It was a most unhappy ending of a day which promised to be filled with the most precious memories for Pastor Lovetruth. For the first time in his life Pastor Lovetruth experienced something of the feeling of Jesus when he said to his disciples as they turned away from him, "Will ye also go away?"

Fully an hour was spent by Pastor Lovetruth on his knees that night, asking the Lord to lead Robert to something that would show him the error of his way.



## CHAPTER VI.

"If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them."-John 13:17.

EEP down in the heart of Pastor Lovetruth there was a consciousness that the time spent with Robert Woodknow had not lost its sweetness on the desert air. "How can I give him up?" came the wailing cry from the great depths of a heart that longed for the good of all men. As by inspiration or presentiment he believed Robert would come back again. His wife laughed at the idea, "He is one of those worthless beats, who go from place to place and betray the confidence of all who place any faith in them," she said. But Pastor Lovetruth would not yield in his convictions. So strong was his faith that he spurned an invitation to take tea Monday evening with Mr. and Mrs. Worldcare. He knew it would mean the spending of the evening with them. He expected Robert Woodknow back Monday evening. And sure enough, Robert, prodigal like, made his appearance at the parsonage Monday evening.

"Mr. Lovetruth," said Robert as he stepped inside the door, "I came to apologize for my rude, unchristian conduct last night. I have come to the crisis of my life. I went home last night and as is my custom, I read a chapter of the Bible before retiring. I chanced to open my Bible at the 19th chapter of Matthew and read from the 16th verse to the close of the chapter. It was about the young ruler. I noted carefully the conditions laid down by Christ. They were sweeping in their application. The young ruler seemed to stagger under their demands. He wanted eternal life, but

he desired to get it some other way than by the cross. He was not ready to pay the cost. The pride of his heart and his love for the world rebelled against the conditions. He went away and that forever. I saw as in a mirror my own mistake. I found that it was a dangerous thing to stand out against the will of Christ. I felt, as never before, that in the next world I should like to be with those who washed the saints' feet. I believed that it would add to my reward. But the pride of my wicked heart rebels. I find that the offense of the cross has not ceased."

"So, Robert, you are afraid of the scoffs of the world. You would like to live the life of the disobedient here and reap the reward of the faithful in the next world. You are very much like the Sundayschool scholar who, when asked which he would like to be, the rich man or Lazarus, replied, 'I would like to be the rich man in this world and Lazarus in the next.' You want to frolic with the world on earth and rejoice with the church in heaven; you want to sow to the flesh and reap to the spirit; you want to serve Mammon in this life and God in the next. This is impossible. If we would reign with Christ we must suffer with him; if we would be exalted then we must humble ourselves now. Your choice in this world will determine your place in the next. Moses chose to suffer affliction with the people of God because he had respect unto the recompence of reward. I was pained last night to see you go away as you did, but I had not given you up. If ever I prayed for an individual it was for you."

"And, Mr. Lovetruth, your request for my prayers as I left last night fairly killed me. I remembered too your prayer at the ordinance meeting for those who neglected to follow Jesus in feet-washing. I saw then for the first that those who neglected the ordinance were really suitable subjects for prayer. They stood in need of prayer. But how could I pray for the Lord to lead you away from the plain teachings of his word? It would have been sin. Nor did I ever hear my pastor, Dr. Augsberg, pray for you as deluded and dangerously in error. He did not dare make such a thought the burden of his prayer. He could speak against it from the pulpit and ridicule it in private conversation, but he did not dare to pray against it. It would have been but a step from blasphemy. But I thought to myself, how Christ-like that prayer of yours which was offered in behalf of those who ignored the ordinance."

"In making a request for your prayers last night it was with a purpose. I believed that it would put you to thinking. I knew that if you once saw your course in the light of the mercy-seat you would see how sinful it was. And it would be a good thing if Dr. Augsberg would reread his commission while on his knees. He evidently has forgotten that it says, "Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you." Let me read for you a clipping from the pen of Bishop Ryle."

"You seem to have a large stock of clippings, Mr. Lovetruth."

"I have. I read a great deal and then try to hold

fast to that which is good. The clipping I wish to read now is Bishop Ryle's comments on 'Laying aside the commandments, ye hold the traditions of men.' 'Full well ye reject the commandments of God, that ye may keep your own traditions.' 'Making the word of God of none effect through your traditions.'"

The first step of the Pharisees was to add their traditions to the Scriptures, as useful supplements. The second was to place them on a level with the word of God, and give them equal authority. The last was to honor them above the Scripture, and to degrade Scripture from its lawful position. This was the state of things which our Lord found when he was upon earth. Practically the traditions of man were everything, and the word of God was nothing at all.

It is a mournful fact, that Christians have far too often walked in the steps of the Pharisees in this matter. The very same process has taken place over and over again. The very same consequences have resulted. Religious observances of man's invention have been pressed on the acceptance of Christians—observances to all appearances useful, and at all events well-meant, but observances nowhere commanded in the word of God. These very observances have by and by been enjoined with more vigor than God's own commandments, and defended with more zeal than the authority of God's own word. Let us draw a broad line of distinction between those things in religion which have been devised by man, and those which are plainly commanded in God's word. What God commands is necessary to salvation. What man commands is not. What man devises may be useful and expedient for the times; but salvation does not hinge on obedience to it. What God requires is essential to life eternal. He that willfully disobers it ruins his own soul.

"Bishop Ryle writes well, but his application of the truths he writes is entirely too limited. Why does he

not apply those truths to the question of a church title, to the ordinance of baptism and the ordinance of feet-washing? Why not let him, whose word is forever settled in heaven, settle every question by his word on earth? Robert, we must accept God's absolute certainties in preference to man's faulty uncertainties, Jehovah's unchangeable truth rather than man's erroneous innovations, the Lord's inflexible law before man's dangerous traditions."

"But would the ordinance of feet-washing not make the church extremely unpopular?"

"No doubt but that it would. Its danger to-day is in its popularity. The tendency of our times is to multiply the attractions of Christianity. Those elements in doctrine, in worship, and in life which serve most strongly to win men's interest are sought with ever-increasing diligence. Never does it occur to us that Christianity may be made too attractive for her own safety. Nature is an austre teacher on this point. She has given to the rose its exquisite fragrance; but she has also armed it with thorns, so that, while the delicious odors allure, these little sentinels stand guard, with their drawn bayonets, to defend the flower, which is endangered by its very beauty and sweetness. The church has too much loveliness and excellence to be trusted on earth without defense. Hypocrites will appropriate her beautiful garments; covetous men will make gain of her godliness; pleasure-seekers will turn the grace of God which she offers into lasciviousness; and the avaricious will make merchandise out of her pearl of great price,—unless her outward attractiveness

is guarded by some counter-defenses. Her honor must be walled about with humility; her graces hedged with self-denial; her gifts must be compassed about with crosses and her triumphs crowned with thorns. Such was the lesson of the judgment that fell upon Ananias and Sapphira. The church was just entering upon her first conquest. The gospel was preached with a freeness and breadth of offer unheard of before. Three thousand souls were added to the church in a single day. The tide of success was rising higher and higher. The followers of the Nazarene were fairly becoming popular. Multitudes were crowding up to lay their gifts at the Apostles' feet. There was danger that the infant church might be overwhelmed in the tide of her own prosperity. But look! Like a keen lightning flash the judgment of God fell and two who 'had agreed to tempt the Spirit of the Lord' lay dead at the Apostles' feet. Robert, we are living in a time when men are bent on making a luxury of religion. They demand that our doctrine shall be pleasant, our worship refined, and artistic, our ordinances beautiful and alluring. No bitter herbs must be upon our table as we keep the feast; no heavy crosses must be laid upon the shoulders as we follow Christ. Shall we yield to their tastes and fancies, or shall we stand also for those harsher demands of Christianity? What if men complain of our austerity? What if they are repelled by our simplicity and plainness of worship? What if we make a discord with their tastes? We must put the nail through those refinements that so often cover the significance of the solemn ordinances

of his house. We must press the thorns into that intellectual pride which would soften the force of God's commands and so bring into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ. Christendom was purest when it was most unpopular. In the history of the seven churches of Asia, as found in the first part of Revelation, we find the churches which lived nearest their Lord to be poor and persecuted and despised. Those which lived farthest from their Lord were rich. had plenty and were popular. The church has no promise of earthly glory on this side of the resurrection. And it would mean a revival of a better and purer type of religion if the ambassadors of Christ everywhere would enforce these plain duties upon the consciences of the children of God. Many would be repelled, it is true, but the true Bride would be brought into a closer embrace with her Beloved."

"But Mr. Lovetruth, what truths are covered up by the setting aside of this ordinance? What is its spiritual significance?"

"It has several meanings, Robert. It may signify the casting out of Judas. Judas was with Jesus until after he instituted the ordinance of feet-washing. He was one of the twelve. But it was only a few moments after Jesus said, 'Ye ought also to wash one another's feet,' that Judas went out and was numbered no more with them. 'He went to his own place,' the Scriptures say. It is a question whether he remained long enough to participate in the Lord's Supper, which ordinance Jesus instituted soon after the ordinance of feet-washing. Feet-washing served as a kind of a sifting process for Judas. It has the same effect now. Hun-

dreds and hundreds, who are moved more by commercial or mercenary consideration than the glory of God, have turned away from the fellowship of the churches of God and united with bodies of Christians in which there are no ordinances to crucify their carnal feelings and appetites. The ordinance would still by a kind of a natural process sift the church of hypocrites and assign them to their 'own place.' The Church loses in number by the ordinance, but she is only strengthened by her decrease and enlarged by her withdrawals. Men and women who are truly sincere are not driven away by crosses and self-denials, but rather covet those things in which they find an opportunity to express their love and lovalty to their Lord. Let the Church in general make the ordinance of feetwashing a pre-requisite to the observance of the Lord's Supper, as Jesus did, and there will be fewer Judases to profane the holy emblems and less hypocrites to pollute her sacred altars."

"Mr. Lovetruth, was that the real purpose of Jesus in instituting the ordinance of feet-washing?"

"Oh no, Robert, the casting out of Judas was only incidental. The Lord's Supper and baptism have their symbolic meanings, yet they have their additional significances which we may legitimately term incidental or secondary. Baptism is an answer of a good conscience towards God, as well as a public profession of the believers' faith in Christ, but that was not the real purpose in the mind of Jesus in instituting the ordinance. So with the ordinance of feet-washing. One of the chief purports of the ordinance is to set forth the humiliation of Christ. Feet, being the lower

members of the body, are expressive of humility. Paul sat at the feet of Gamaliel. The earth is spoken of as being the Lord's footstool, which shows the humble sphere of our activity. And how effectually Jesus weaves the idea of his humiliation into the ordinance of feet-washing. The declaration, 'He was come from God and went to God,' which tells the story of his humiliation in epitome, is immediately followed with the statement, 'He riseth from supper \* \* and began to wash the disciples' feet.' Think of it, Robert, he, 'who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God; but made him of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.' This act of Iesus is the mystery of the universe. 'Great is the mystery of godliness: God manifest in the flesh.' I can not conceive of an animal becoming a plant, or a man becoming a beast. They are impossibilities. The nearest thing to it that history records is the act of Nebuchadnezzar,\* who lost his reason for a season and ate grass with the oxen 'till his hairs were grown like eagles' feathers and his nails like birds' claws.' It was a dreadful fall in his nature. And how God became man I know not. It is the miracle of the ages. "The word was made flesh and dwelt among us.' We can not understand it. 'He was made sin for us who knew no sin.' It is the hidden secret of the Godhead. What marvellous condescension, Robert! What astounding

<sup>\*</sup>Daniel 4:32-34.

humiliation! When I read, 'He made himself of no reputation' I can not help but associate the little word no with the word so in 'God so loved the world.' The word so expresses the infinite love of God and the word no the infinite humiliation in which that love was expressed. But in addition to the humiliation of Christ, the ordinance of feet-washing signifies the believers' need of daily cleansing from sin."

"In what way, Mr. Lovetruth?"

"Why, the Christian life is a journey or pilgrimage, and just as the earthly pilgrim's feet become defiled and need cleansing often, so the Christian in his contact with the world becomes defiled and also needs frequent cleansing. And feet-washing is the ordinance Jesus has instituted to symbolize this fact."

"You do not mean to say, Mr. Lovetruth, that washing one another's feet takes away sin, do you?"

"Oh, no, Robert. I might just as well say that you were literally raised from the dead last Sunday when I immersed you. Or I might say that we drink the real blood of Christ and eat the real flesh of Christ when we observe the Lord's Supper. The physical emblems and acts in the observance of the ordinances are only intended as symbols of great spiritual truths."

"And what is the truth or fact, Mr. Lovetruth, that feet-washing symbolizes?"

"It symbolizes the work of Christ as our Advocate. The work of Jesus for the believer did not stop at the cross, just as God's work for Israel did not end with the killing of the Passover lamb, which saved them from death. In their pilgrimage to Canaan they needed a priesthood by which their daily transgressions could

be put away. At the cross we were saved from death by Christ our Substitute; now we are daily kept clean from sin by Christ our High Priest or Advocate. John says, 'Now if any man sin we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the Righteous.' Jesus does not save us and then leave us to take care of ourselves. He 'who loved his own which were in the world, loved them unto the end.' That love that saved at the cross by his death is perpetuated in his life as our Advocate. 'For if, when we were sinners, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life.' So, Robert, that love which continues the work begun at the cross in keeping the saved clean is symbolized by feet-washing. When Jesus told Peter that 'What I do thou knowest not now, but thou shalt know hereafter,' he showed beyond all question of doubt that his act in washing his disciples' feet had no reference to the putting away of filth. Had Jesus washed the disciples' feet for cleansing purposes, Peter evidently would have known the meaning of it. But he did not, for the act was intended to teach a spiritual truth."

"I don't know why, Mr. Lovetruth, but I always feel so sinful in going to the Communion."

"That, Robert, is a common feeling among all believers. It is natural that we should feel so. And, Robert, have you ever thought of feet-washing as being the remedy for that feeling? Speak of preparatory services to the Communion. This is the best preparatory service. This is the biblical preparatory service. And this fact alone should determine the order of the ordinances. To observe feet-washing after the Com-

munion would be without purpose. It would have no meaning. It would be without design."

"But, Mr. Lovetruth, do some of the churches observe feet-washing after the Communion?"

"Unfortunately, Robert, I must confess that they do. And the difficulty arises from the fact that they confuse the Lord's Supper or the Communion with the Passover supper. In the 4th verse of the 13th chapter of John where it says, 'He riseth from supper' and then follows with an account of the washing of the saints' feet, is the Scripture that causes all the trouble. The supper referred to in that verse is the Passover supper, and not the Lord's Supper, as some would make it appear. The Lord's Supper followed the washing of the disciples' feet."

"I would find no difficulty with that," said Robert. "Besides, to observe feet-washing after the Communion would be to destroy its force as a preparatory service, which to me is one of the most beautiful thoughts you have mentioned in connection with the ordinance."

"And, Robert, we see the same thing in the types of the Tabernacle. Aaron and his sons did not dare to go into the Tabernacle and commune with the Lord or minister at the altar until they had first washed their hands and feet\* in the great brazen laver. Death was the penalty for disobedience. The altar and the victim was a type of Christ's death which is symbolized in the bread of the Lord's Supper and the Tabernacle was a type of Communion which is symbolized by the cup of wine. And just as the priest of old dared not

<sup>\*</sup>Exodus 30:17-21.

approach the altar of the Lord or enter the Tabernacle with unwashed hands and feet, so believers should never take the emblem of the Lord's death or drink the cup of the Communion until they have first washed feet."

"But why do the churches of God not wash both hands and feet as the priests did? And why do they wash one another's feet? The priests washed their own feet."

"He will not have us wash our hands, for he would teach us that the dispensation of works has passed away. And he would not have us wash our own feet, to teach us that our cleansing is not of ourselves. Robert, I know of nothing in our religion that is more beautiful in its symbolic significance than the ordinances of feet-washing and the Lord's Supper and the manner they are joined together. Separate the two or reverse the order and you will destroy all their beauty and strike out all they would symbolize. Robert, is not the ordinance of feet-washing a most gracious provision for the sinfulness the believer feels in going to the Lord's table? Many times have I gone to these services pressed down with an unworthiness I could not express. I felt I needed cleansing before I could commune. I engaged in washing one another's feet, which was a confession of my sinfulness. And what I expressed by faith in symbol in the ordinance of feet-washing the Holy Ghost made real to me, just as he makes Jesus Christ spiritual meat and drink to us when in faith we partake of the emblems of his broken body and shed blood."

"Now, Mr. Lovetruth, in case I should once take

part in the washing of the saints' feet, would that not do for all time? You only demand a person to be baptized once."

"Robert, the nature of the ordinances determine the manner and frequency of their observance. Let us see how clear this is. You say that I demand a person to be baptized only once. That is true. The reason is this: baptism symbolizes but a single fact. Christ was buried and raised from the dead but once. We expect to be buried and raised from the dead but once. With the Communion or Lord's Supper it is different. The Communion is to symbolize our spiritual feeding upon Christ. This feeding should be frequent, just as it is necessary to feed the physical man often to sustain physical life. So, then, to observe the Communion but once and never after that would be equivalent to saying that we believe in having communion or fellowship with the Lord but once and no more, and that that must suffice to give spiritual strength for every struggle and task throughout our entire Christian life. So the nature of feet-washing determines the manner and frequency of its observance. Feet-washing, as I told you before, symbolizes our need of cleansing from sin. This need is frequent. The observance of the ordinance, therefore, should be frequent. And the person who would observe this ordinance once and never after that as much as tells the world that he was once cleansed from sin and never again needs cleansing. I have met persons already that said they never sinned, but you could hardly make their next door neighbor believe it "

"Mr. Lovetruth, have the churches of God always taught these precious truths?"

"Yes, Robert, why do you ask me that?"

"It seems strange that so few have accepted them."

"Are you ready to accept them?"

"Ready! I could never be more ready than now. I would sin against conscience and better light if I did otherwise. My act would place me with that class who knew their Lord's will and did it not and were beaten with many stripes. If satisfactory to you, Mr. Lovetruth, I will be fellowshiped with the church next Sunday. These few weeks have meant more to me than all the religious instructions of my life. I am a changed man. The Lord, the Bible, the church and religion never were as much to me before. I can not express my gratitude. But just one question which has been a query to me. Is there any significance to be attached to the fact that last Sunday you only observed the Lord's Supper in the evening? Was it because some other service interfered with its observance in the morning?"

"We never observe the Lord's Supper in the morning. You never heard of any one eating a supper at that time. That would be the Lord's breakfast and not the Lord's Supper."

Pastor Lovetruth and Robert Woodknow were now

"One in hope and doctrine, One in charity."

Controversy had ceased. Robert had asked his last question. His mind was satisfied. And although they conversed until quite late not once did their conversation take the form of a dispute.

## CHAPTER VII.

"Be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you."—I. Peter 3:15.

T was only a few weeks after Robert Woodknow was fellowshiped with the church of God, in Ismville, that his mother learned of his step. Mrs. Woodknow was a member of Dr. Augsberg's church. She called on her pastor and informed him of her son's course, and begged him to write her son with a view of having him recant from his strange views. Dr. Augsberg cheerfully consented to Mrs. Woodknow's request, as he felt the act of Robert almost as keenly as did his mother.

On coming home one evening from his work Robert found that the postman had left a letter for him. It was from Dr. Augsberg. Robert knew the writing. "What can this mean?" he said to himself as he opened it and read the contents. The contents were no great surprise. He put the letter aside, fully decided in his mind after supper to write a reply. He wrote until late that evening, using his Bible freely. The next evening he called on Pastor Lovetruth. He had no more than gotten inside the door of the parsonage until he opened the subject. "I received a letter from Dr. Augsberg yesterday," he said, half impatient for the privilege of reading its contents to his new pastor. "Dr. Augsberg evidently found out through some source of my step in uniting with the church of God."

"What had he to say about it, Robert?"

"I will read the letter to you."

Robert read the letter to Pastor Lovetruth, which was as follows:

WERMSVILLE, PA., September 15, 1902.

Mr. Robert Woodknow, Ismville, Pa.

DEAR ROBERT:—I learned with deep and sincere regret through your dear mother a few days since of your course in respect to a church home. Just how you could take such a step is an enigma to me. If I thought any one was fully established in the faith of our Church it was you. Your poor, old mother, dear saint that she is, is nearly prostrated over the news. I am filled with grave fears, that if you do not recant that your step will take her to an untimely grave.

And why, Robert, should you leave our own Church and unite with a body whose numerical strength is only about one-fourth as great? Your course, as I see it, is inexcusable. I find nothing at all to justify it. It is true that we have no congregation in Ismville, yet we have a large following scattered throughout the town. Several families of my congregation moved to Ismville inside of the last few months. It is only a question of a short time and the Church of the Reformation will have an organization there and a church edifice that will do credit to a town twice the size of Ismville. Could you not have waited until then? Moreover, your stay in Ismville for any length of time is clothed with much uncertainty.

The more I think of your course (and I think of it often), the more unreasonable it appears. I have also been informed that you were immersed recently. How could you set aside the act by which your mother consecrated you to the Lord? How could you brand your baptism in infancy, which meant so much to you, as an error? Had you paused but for a moment before acting, the folly of your step would have been apparent.

But more strange than these is your course when I consider that the body of people with whom you united practice an ordinance that is shockingly repugnant to refined tastes. How can you submit to such a crucifixion of the flesh?

I do hope, my dear Robert, that you will see the error of

your step, reconsider, and come back to your mother Church. I wait with much interest an early reply. Sincerely yours,

JAMES AUGSBERG.

"What do you intend to do about it, Robert?"

"My purpose is to make a reply. I have it written now. I wrote it last night. I want to read it to you and see what you think of it."

Robert read his letter. It was this:

ISMVILLE, PA., September 23, 1902.

Rev. James Augsberg, D. D., Wermsville, Pa.

Dear Doctor:—Your letter of the 15th inst., in which you state that my recent step was an "enigma" to you, came duly to hand. My change in church relations should be an "enigma" to no one. What I did is no more than any other conscientious person would have done under the same circumstances. Did not Martin Luther break away from the papacy? And is his step not a glorious fact in the history of Protestantism? Now why should you throw up your hands, as it were, in horror when I break away from those dregs of the papacy still found in the mother Church?

Nor am I indifferent as to what you say about my dear mother. It is but natural that she should feel as she does. I wrote her the other day and explained matters fully, which, I think, will pacify her troubled mind. Yet much as I love my mother, I have learned this, Doctor, that to be a wortly disciple of Jesus I must forsake father and mother, and brothers and sisters. The question resolved itself into such a form that I had but one of two things to do; either obey my mother and disobey the Lord, or obey the Lord and disobey my mother. I chose the latter. If you could have heard what I did the past few months and weighed it all with an unbiased and unprejudiced mind, I should not be surprised in the least if you, with your entire large congregation, would have done precisely the same as I did. You would have cast aside your human church name, your human creed, and your human ordinances and would have taken the Bible name for the church, the Bible for your creed and would have begun to observe the ordinances in a Bible manner. I was just as stubborn in my convictions as anyone, but Mr. Lovetruth's arguments were so biblical, so logical and so convincing, that at last I saw I was withstanding the will of God in these matters and not the reasoning of one of his ministers. I know, as never before, what Paul means when he says, "Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ." I find the Bible precludes the boasted liberty of some churches to think and believe as you please in matters of religion.

And by the way, Doctor, I just read last week in the book of Revelation how the church at Pergamos was praised for holding fast the Lord's name and how the church at Philadelphia was commended for not denying his name. And these two churches, with the other five of the Revelation, you always taught was a picture of the church between Pentecost and the Lord's second coming. Now why, I ask, should you censure me for throwing off a sectarian church title and taking the Lord's name, the name Church of God? Would you have me deny his name when he commends\* those who deny it not? I am coerced by an array of indisputable facts and arguments which I cannot gainsay.

And why should you rebuke me for taking up with a people who wash one another's feet? As long as you assumed the responsibility of your entire congregation for the neglect of this very significant ordinance I felt no fears, but when Mr. Lovetruth pressed the question upon me as a matter between me and my God my sense of right forbid me throwing off the responsibility. I could not assume for myself what you have assumed for your whole congregation. How can you, Doctor, denounce the ordinance as impolite and absurd? Have you lost the sense of what constitutes moral obligation in these matters? And how dare you, in the face of the plain things said about it by Jesus in the 13th chapter of John, ridicule it? Had you taught it when I was a member of your church, as plainly as the Scriptures teach it, few of us would have refused to have followed the example of Jesus in its observance. To me the word of God is too sacred to allow me to be liberal with its claims. Who gave you the license to

<sup>\*</sup>Revelation 2:13; 3:8.

offer such liberty to men in the use of divine truth? Where is your commission for teaching men to neglect whatsoever in your judgment you deem impolite or absurd? As for me I shall choose the path of obedience. It is the only path of safety.

May I hope, in conclusion, that my words will cause no offense. I have written in all sincerity. If I have said anything that savors of a spirit of unkindness I ask your pardon. But I beg you, in Jesus' name, to consider well before you again attempt to turn away a trustful soul from the explicit teachings of Jesus.

Yours for the truth,

ROBERT WOODKNOW.

"I am pleased, Robert, to see the strength of conviction you express in your reply to Dr. Augsberg. It is a most noble defense of the 'faith once delivered to the saints.' I feel quite sure that Dr. Augsberg will never tempt you again to turn from the path of full and absolute obedience to the commands of Jesus."

"It is little, Mr. Lovetruth, that I can do, but I mean, by God's grace, to be faithful. I find that the promises of the word are not to the successful and popular, but to the true and faithful."

The truth in Robert's heart had long been shaded by dogmas and beliefs of man's invention, but when it was brought under the "true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world," it sprang forth most gloriously.

> "Truth crushed to earth shall rise again And the eternal years of God are hers, But error, wounded, writhes in pain, And dies amid her worshipers."





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